

DATE : 07 FEB 2019

DAY : Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



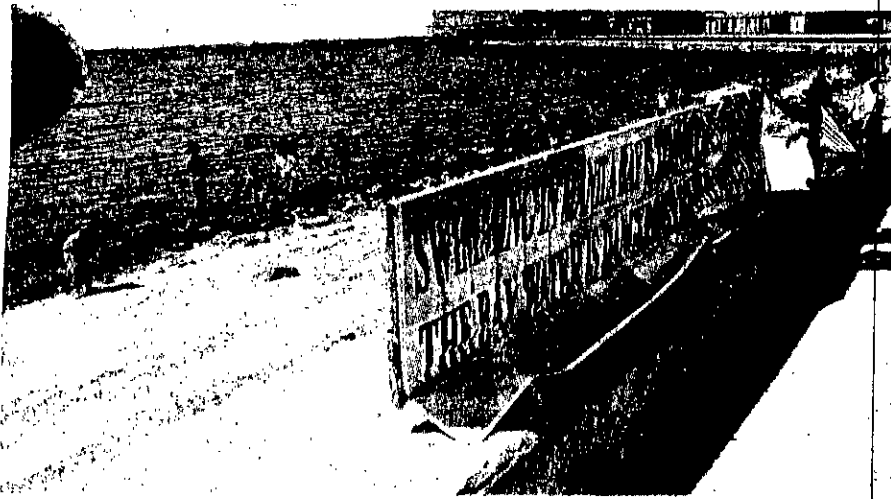
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Manila Standard

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NOT YET, SWIMMERS. Environment authorities have placed a streamer at Manila's seawall, seen Wednesday, prohibiting people from swimming in the still unsafe waters of Manila Bay while earnest rehabilitation efforts are in high gear. **Norman Cruz (Story on A3)**

DENR to put fence along Bay seawall

By Rio N. Araja

THREE days from now, the Manila Baywalk will be closed for any swimming activity, at least for the next six months.

This is because the Department of Environment and Natural Resources plans to put up a perimeter fence along the beachfront to prevent people from swimming in the polluted waters while rehabilitation is ongoing.

"We are about to close the swimming area. We did not anticipate the influx of people. We are closing the beach front," said DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, who led the inspection of the bay and ordered to block the shoreline from the United States Embassy, up to the Manila Yacht Club with orange plastic barriers, which will be replaced by a four-foot fence.

The fence will be built along the sea-

wall of the Manila Baywalk—the seaside public walkway overlooking Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard.

The fence will cover the area starting from the Manila Yacht Club to the US Embassy. The DENR said the construction of the fence will start in the next three days, while the Baywalk beachfront may be closed for six months.

Cimatu, however said that people can still view the Manila Bay sunset.

"Ang iko-close lang sa'yung tubig but Baywalk will still be open."

"Hindi lang puwede pasukin 'yung tubig kasi paano ka maglilinis kung may mga nagsi-swimming?" he said.

Cimatu added that due to its high level of coliform bacteria, the Manila Bay is unsafe for bathing.

The DENR chief said that though the fecal coliform count in the swimming area of Manila Bay has improved from 330 million most probable number (mpn) per 100 milliliters to only 7.5 million mpn/100ml, the levels are still far from being safe for swimming.

The standard coliform level for coastal waters which is safe for swimming and other similar recreational activities is at only 100 mpn/100ml.

The Department of Health earlier made the same warning to the public because the area is still unsafe and polluted.

An 11-year-old girl, a grade six pupil from Adriatico, Manila, is now in critical condition at the Ospital ng Maynila's intensive care unit after nearly drowning while swimming with her friends at the Manila Bay last Tuesday.

Attending physicians continued to

remove the excess fluid in her lungs.

"Bathing in Manila Bay can expose people to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, which could increase their chances of developing illnesses. Government has not yet given the all-clear signal for swimming," Cimatu said.

In 2008, the Supreme Court issued a writ of continuing mandamus ordering the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and 12 other agencies to restore the waters of Manila Bay "as safe for regular use by the public for activities."

The DENR chief had vowed an "across-the-board" crackdown against Manila Bay polluters.

"No establishment that is polluting Manila Bay will be spared from the crackdown. We will make sure all establishments will go through inspection and the violators will have to pay the price for polluting the environment," he said.



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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

No more swimming: Manila Bay to be fenced off

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu led yesterday the installation of a fence along the Manila Bay boardwalk on Roxas Boulevard to prevent residents from swimming in the polluted waters during the rehabilitation of the bay.

strictly implementing the ban on swimming in the bay after a teenage girl almost drowned recently while swimming in the polluted waters. Cimatu said that Manila Bay remains unsafe for bathing due to high levels of "fecal coliform bacteria" in the water, and the bay remains a "no-swimming zone."

Fecal coliform level in Manila Bay, prior to the launching of the rehabilitation program, was recorded at 330 mpn per 100 milliliters. The acceptable level is 100 mpn per 100 milliliters. Cimatu said that high, fecal coliform in the bay could cause typhoid fever, hepatitis, gastroenteritis, dysentery and

Turn to Page 4

A sign is posted on Manila's Baywalk yesterday as an inter-agency task force prepares to put up a perimeter fence along the beachfront to dissuade people from swimming in the polluted waters during the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. **BERNARDO RAMOS**



No more From Page 1

ear infections. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said a four-foot fence will be set up along the bay walk from the US embassy to the Manila Yacht Club. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is conducting the desilting of Manila Bay waters to remove the 40- to 50-year-old silt and garbage at the bottom of the bay. A diversion drainage will be constructed along the seaside through which wastewater of nearby establishments will pass, all the way to the Manila Yacht Club where a water treatment plant will be constructed. Cimatu said the water treatment facility will ensure that clean water would be dumped to Manila Bay. Environment Undersecretary Sherwin Rigor said the

garbage to be desilted from the bay is about one to three meters in depth and has been there for more than 40 years. Rigor said the first thing they have to do is identify the submerged materials and see what is the best strategy for the cleanup. The DPWH would deploy heavy equipment for the desilting of garbage and construction of the diversion drainage canal within a month. DPWH Bureau of Equipment director Toribio Noel Ilao said his office will start deploying heavy equipment in Manila Bay for silt removal operations starting this month. Ilao said their recent survey of a 1.5-kilometer stretch of Manila Bay revealed that it is heavily silted due to the accumulation of solid waste over the years. Cimatu said the desilting

and construction of the canal would continue until Manila Bay is fully rehabilitated and back to its old form. The Manila Bay Rehabilitation Task Force composed of the DENR, DPWH, National Historical Commission and other attached agencies intends to achieve a sustainable Manila Bay rehabilitation program. "My mission is to rehabilitate Manila Bay, like what we did in Boracay. We will implement the comprehensive plan for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay," Cimatu said. Cimatu said people will be allowed to come and see the sunset and sunrise in Manila Bay, but they cannot swim in the bay. "We could realize the total rehabilitation of Manila within three to seven years and we do not know what will happen beyond that. But I am very optimistic that the succeeding administration would continue the good programs that

we will leave involving Manila Bay," Cimatu said. **P42-billion budget** President Duterte has allocated P42 billion for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay over three years and at least three government agencies would be working together to carry out the mission dubbed the "Battle for Manila Bay." Cimatu said that around P6 billion or roughly 14 percent of the budget will be used for cleanup activities, including information and educational campaign on the importance of keeping Manila Bay clean. He said the remaining P36 billion will be spent for relocation and provision of support systems like access to jobs and livelihoods and construction of town centers with recreational areas, markets, church, schools and hospitals. - With Louise Maureen Simeon, Elizabeth Marcelo, Mayen Jaymalin



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The Manila Times

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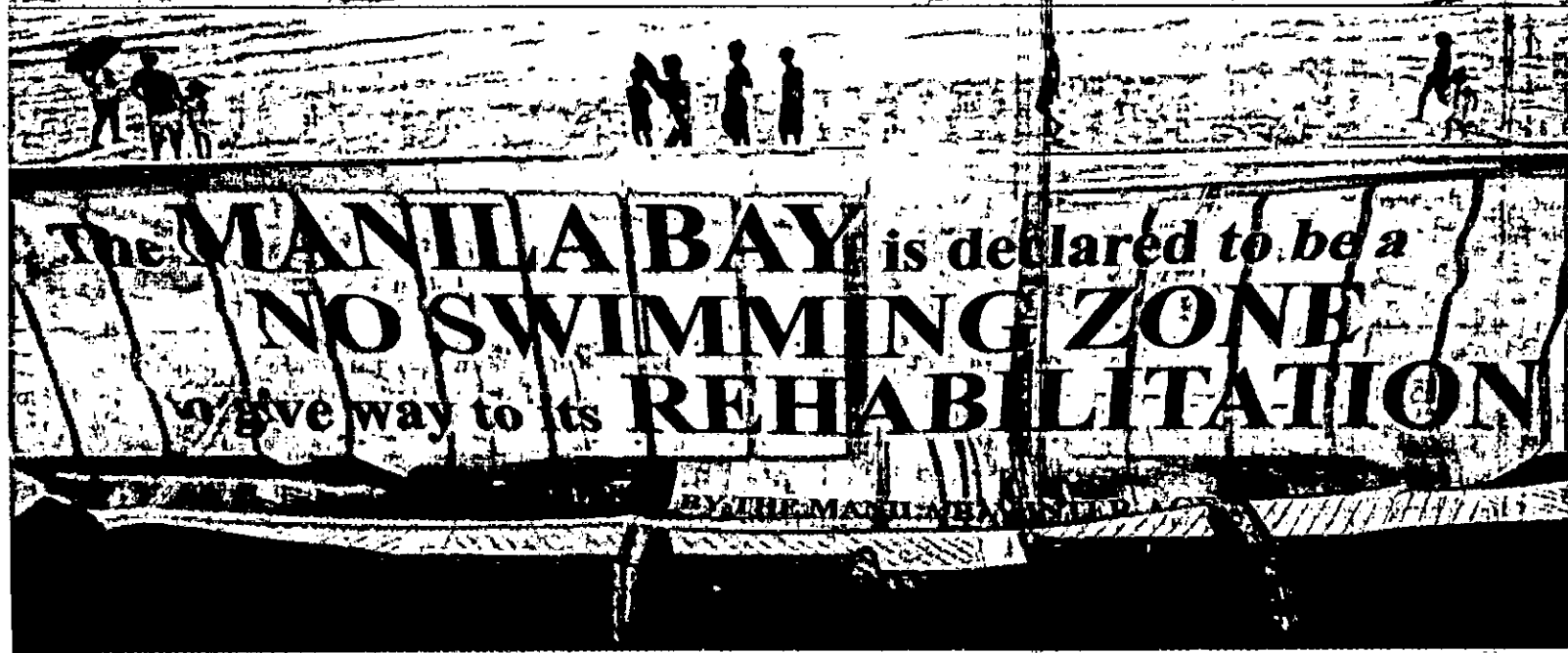
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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Strategic Communication Initiatives Service

THURSDAY February 7, 2019

News



NO SWIMMING A notice warns the public from swimming in Manila Bay. PHOTO BY RUSSELL PALMA

Manila's Baywalk closed to tourists, swimmers

THE government has shut down the Baywalk along Roxas Boulevard to prevent the surge of sightseers and swimmers as the rehabilitation of Manila Bay continues.

The move was done as an 11-year-old girl lies in critical condition after almost drowning and swallowing a large amount of water from the bay.

Environment Undersecretary

Benny Antiporda said the entire stretch of Baywalk from the US Embassy near Rizal Park to the Cultural Center of the Philippines, just past the Manila Yacht Club, was fenced off.

"It will be renovated to become world-class," Antiporda said.

Orange plastic barriers were used to seal off the two-kilometer seaside

promenade that overlooks Manila Bay, and additional warning signs against swimming were also put up.

The Manila Public Information office said they would put up more warning signages to warn the public not to swim in bay at the moment.

The parents of the young girl who almost drowned sought financial help as she remained at the Intensive

Care Unit of a hospital.

The victim went for a swim at the bay on Monday.

Her mother, Marivic Madillas, said she and her child went to the Manila bay on Sunday, but she was unaware that her child went back on Monday.

The bay's cleanup, which experts said could take years, is estimated to cost P47 billion.

Thousands of government workers and volunteers collected tons of garbage during the launch of its rehabilitation last month.

Antipolo City Mayor Casimiro "Jun" Ynares 3rd ordered the environment and city disaster offices to clean creeks, canals and rivers that lead to the Manila Bay.

FRANCIS EARL CUETO



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No fencing out glorious sunset

A four-foot-high fence will take the place of orange barriers placed by authorities along Manila Bay's shoreline to stop people from swimming in its polluted waters.

The orange barriers sealed off the stretch of shoreline from the US Embassy to the Manila Yacht Club, an area where the sunset lures hundreds of tourists daily.

"The sunset and the sea will still be visible because the fence is low," said Cimatu in a statement.

"We don't have any intention to prevent people from going there. We just wish that they will not push the fence and cause it to fall. We can't have people swimming there while the clean-up is ongoing," he said.

He explained the fence construction and repair of drainage in the area will take six months.

Miguel Paolo Togon



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1800

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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'No swim zone' strictly enforced in Manila Bay.

By **ERMA EDERA**
and **ELLYN DEVERA-ROIZ**

Members of the Manila Police District (MPD) were deployed yesterday to prevent people from swimming in Manila Bay which authorities declared as unsafe due to high **► 17**

levels of fecal coliform.

Manila Police District chief Vicente Danao Jr. said that 15 to 20 members of the Manila Police District were assigned around the vicinity of the Manila Bay to make sure that no one would go beyond the barricade and attempt to swim in the bay.

But despite the presence of the policemen there, an 11-year-old girl was reported to now be in critical condition after she nearly drowned while swimming with friends at the Manila Bay on Tuesday morning. She was rescued by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) personnel.

Police identified the girl as Rhianna Janiel Soriano, a Grade 6 student and a resident of Adriatico Street, Manila.

The victim's mother, Marivic Madilas, said her daughter is now recuperating at the pediatric intensive care unit of the Ospital ng Maynila.

She was rushed by the MMDA to the hospital after she was rescued from drowning.

The girl's mother said that she only learned of the incident when her daughter's friend informed her that her daughter was already in the hospital.

"Naengganyo kasi siya mag-swimming kasi akala niya na malinis na ang Manila Bay," (She went swimming because she thought that the water in Manila Bay was clean), she said.

Meanwhile, the Manila Police said that they have asked for assistance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to put barriers around the area.

"Kaya humihingi po kami ng tulong sa DENR (That's why we are asking assistance from the DENR) and local government to implement peace and order at paglalagay ng (to put) barrier around the bay," Danao said.

The Manila Bay Inter-Agency Task Force has declared Manila Bay as a no-swim zone to pave the way for its rehabilitation.

High levels of fecal coliform

"Bathing in Manila Bay can expose people to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, which could increase their chances of developing illnesses. Government has not yet given the all-clear signal for swimming," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

Fecal coliform are bacteria associated with fecal material from humans and other animals. They enter bodies of water from sources, such as direct defecation or sewage overflow.

Cimatu issued the warning after photos and videos of people, including children, bathing in the waters along Roxas Boulevard in

Manila circulated online.

After the clean-up drive last Jan. 27, photos of a visibly cleaner Manila Bay went viral.

Cimatu said the clean up activity, while laudable, had only addressed surface trash.

The DENR chief cited that as of Jan. 28, water monitoring stations set up along the bay area have registered fecal coliform levels measuring as much as 35 million most probable number (mpn) per 100 milliliters (mL), specifically taken from the Rajah Soliman outfall (Station 5).

DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) has set up eight water quality monitoring stations along Roxas Boulevard, between the United States Embassy and the Manila Yacht Club.

Another sampling station set up at the Padre Faura drainage outfall (Station 2) registered a fecal coliform count of 7.9 million mpn/100 mL.

The standard coliform level for coastal waters that is safe for swimming and other similar recreational activities is at only 100 mpn/100 mL.

"We have not yet gotten rid of pollutants, such as those from untreated wastewater being discharged into the bay, so we strongly advise the public, especially children, to refrain from swimming in the bay for now," he reiterated.

As for the water sampling in the other stations along Baywalk, the fecal coliform count in mpn/100 mL is as follows: Station 1 beside the United States Embassy, 3,100; Station 3 in front of Diamond Hotel, 7,900; Station 4 at Carpel Shell Export and Museum, 2,400; Station 6 in front of Metrobank near Grand Hotel, 2,400; Station 7 in front of Admiral Hotel, 3,300; and Station 8 across the Quirino Avenue stoplight, 13,000.

The Department of Health had earlier also warned that it is not safe to swim in Manila Bay, citing health issues.

Diseases and illnesses that can be contracted in water with high fecal coliform counts include typhoid fever, hepatitis, gastroenteritis, dysentery and ear infections.

More than conducting clean-up activities, Cimatu said the real challenge was in addressing sources of water pollution, such as sewage or untreated wastewater being discharged either directly into the bay or via its tributaries.

DENR had previously reported that the coliform level in Manila Bay had reached as much as 330 million mpn/100 mL, which is 3.3 million percent over the standard.



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MANILA BAY

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IS NO-

SWIM ZONE





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'No-swim zone' strictly enforced in Manila Bay

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ
• ERMA EDERA

Policemen were deployed yesterday to prevent people from swimming in Manila Bay which authorities declared remains unsafe due to high levels of fecal coliform.

Manila Police District chief Vicente Danao Jr. said that 15 to 20 members of the Manila Police District were assigned around the vicinity of the Manila Bay to make sure that no one would go beyond the barricade and attempt to swim in the bay.

"Walang violation at penalty po kasing pinapataw kapag nagswimming sa Manila Bay kaya pinapaalala

at pinagsasabihan lang namin 'yung mga tao na hindi pa susceptible ang tubig sa area," said Danao.

"Kaya humihingi po kami ng tulong sa DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) at local government to implement peace and order at paglalagay ng barrier around the bay," he added.

The Manila Bay Inter-Agency Task Force has declared Manila Bay as a no-swim zone to pave the way for its rehabilitation.

"Bathing in Manila Bay can expose people to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, which could increase their chances of developing illnesses. Government has not yet given the

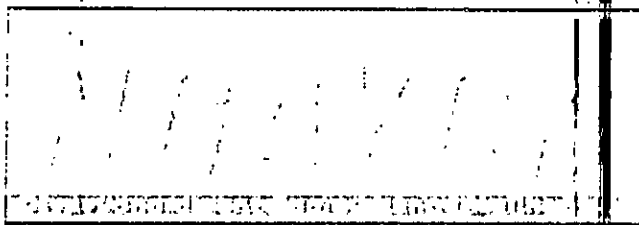
all-clear signal for swimming," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

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After the clean up drive last Jan. 27, photos of a "visibly cleaner" Manila Bay went viral.

Cimatu said the clean up activity, while laudable, had only addressed surface trash.



MANILA BAY **PAHINA 8** BINAKURAN NA!

8 JO LISING-ABELGAS • Editor

METRO NGAYON

Manila Bay binakuran

Binakuran na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang 1.5 kilometro na kahabaan ng Manila Bay bilang bahagi ng rehabilitasyon at panimula sa paglalagay ng tubo para sa maayos na sewerage system na pipigil sa polusyon sa tubig ng baybayin.

Ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, ipinuwesto ang harang na bakal simula sa US Embassy hanggang Manila Yacht Club na sumasakop sa mga estero ng Padre Faura, Remedios at De Abad na aniya ay kabilang sa mga nagpaparumi sa tubig ng Manila Bay.

Ang ikakabit na tubo ang magiging daluyan umano ng tubig sa paglilinis nila ng mga basura sa baybayin.

Bukod sa mga inaanod na basura, inaasahang makapal na burak umano ang mahahakot mula sa ilalim ng dagat, dahilan upang mabansagan ito bilang "Burakay."

Sa idinaos na media forum sa Kapihan sa Manila Bay kahapon, sinabi ng kalihim na layon din ng ilalagay nilang harang na mapigilan ang mga taong lumangoy sa baybayin habang hindi pa nila ito idinideklarang lubusang malinis at ligtas na gawing public swimming pool.

Nina DORIS FRANCHE
at ANGIE DELA CRUZ

Ibinunyag din nito na 65 establisimiyento pa sa paligid ng Manila Bay ang posibleng maipasara nila dahil sa paglabag sa mga batas pangkapaligiran na pangunahin anyang dahilan ng polusyon.

Kasabay nito'y tiniyak naman ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na hindi paaalisin sa kanilang mga tirahan ang mga residente ng Baseco sa Maynila habang isinasagawa ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Magtatayo aniya sila ng temporary communal septic tank sa iba't ibang bahagi

PEBRERO 7, 2019

na ng DENR

ng compound para hindi tumapon sa baybayin ang kanilang mga dumi.

Samantala, paaalisin naman ng DENR ang mga informal settler na nasa paligid ng baybayin sa Cavite upang bigyangdaan ang paglilinis sa

bahaging ito ng Manila Bay. Sinabi ni Antiporda na bibigyan naman nila ng maayos na relokasyon ang mga paaalising informal settler.

Binakuran na kahapon ng DENR ang may 1.5 kilometro na kahabaan ng Manila Bay kaugnay sa isasagawang rehabilitasyon nito at para na rin maiwasan itong gawing public swimming pool na delikado sa kalusugan. (Kuha ni KJ Rosales)





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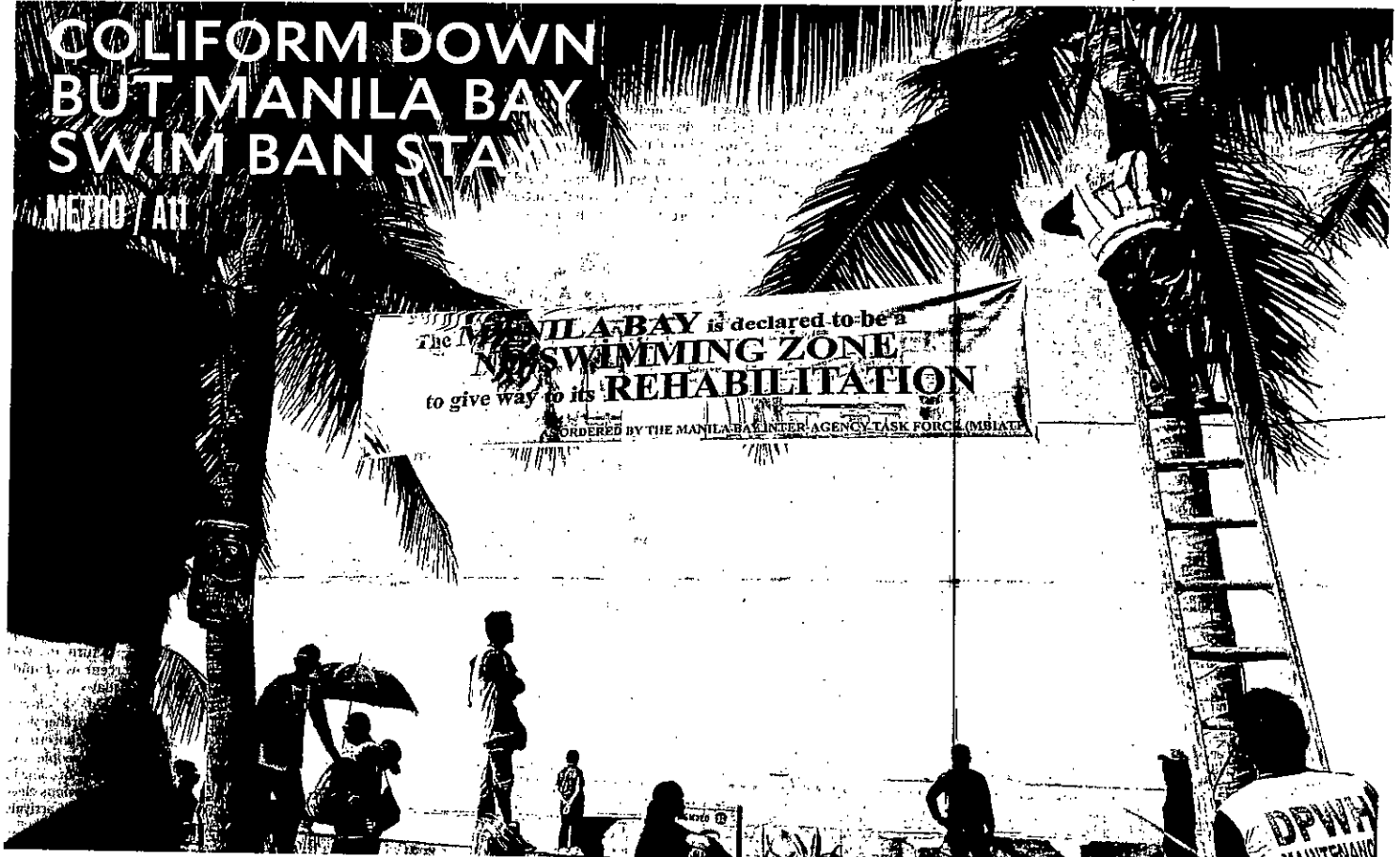
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SCENIC VIEW, TOXIC WATERS Aside from putting up this sign, authorities will soon fence off a portion of Manila Bay to further deter bathers who might think it's already safe to go for a swim after a major cleanup drive recently cleared the coast of trash. —RICHARD A. REYES

COLIFORM LEVELS DOWN BUT SWIMMING STILL BANNED

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

The government's crackdown on establishments polluting Manila Bay has already yielded positive results, with fecal coliform levels dropping in some areas, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Wednesday.

Despite the improvement, however, the DENR discouraged people from going for a swim, warning that the bay's waters were still unsafe.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said in a press briefing that the cleanup activities, which officially began around two weeks ago, had only addressed surface trash.

"We have not yet gotten rid of pollutants such as those from untreated wastewater being discharged into the bay, so we strongly advise the public, especially children, to refrain from swimming in the bay for now," he told reporters.

On Tuesday morning, an 11-year-old girl nearly drowned after she went for a swim with her friends.

The victim was rushed to the Ospital ng Maynila where she re-

mains confined at the intensive care unit of the pediatrics ward.

According to Rose, the girl's older sister, the victim left their house in Malate before 8 a.m.

She said they had yet to find out what happened to her sister. "Her friends just went to our house to inform our mother that my sister nearly drowned," Rose told the Inquirer.

According to Dr. Jilliane Pardo of the hospital's pediatrics ward, if the girl's condition continues to improve, they will remove the tube sucking water out of her lungs either on Wednesday night or Thursday morning.

Fence eyed to deter bathers

Still in line with the massive rehabilitation project, Cimatu said that the DENR would fence off a portion of the shoreline in the next few days—from the US Embassy to Manila Yacht Club—to make way for the installation of a diversion drainage.

The proposed 4-foot-high fence, Cimatu added, was also expected to deter swimmers. While bathing was prohibited, there was no ban on viewing the bay's famous sunset, he said.

—WITH A REPORT FROM AIE BALAGTASSEE INQ

MANILA BAY REHAB



BAY WATCHERS Policemen warn promenaders about the dangers of swimming in Manila Bay after a girl nearly drowned on Tuesday. —RICHARD A. REYES



Manila Bay still a cesspool

Coliform count falling but remains high

Roxas Boulevard tests show millions of bacteria compared to Boracay's 100mpn/100ml when the latter was ordered closed by President Duterte

by Kuhlin Cesilo Gacuta

The numbers are out and, while they are encouraging, they affirmed the warning of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that Manila Bay's waters are still unsafe for swimming due to high coliform bacteria count.

"Bathing in Manila Bay can expose people to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria which could increase their chances of developing illnesses. Government has not yet given the all-clear signal for swimming," DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said.

The DENR yesterday started putting signage along the bay's shoreline echoing the

warning of Cimatu and the Department of Health that people risk contracting diseases from getting in contact with the bay's polluted waters.

Before the clean-up was started on 27 January, the DENR announced coliform level of about 330 million mpn (most probable number) per 100 milliliter (ml), 3.3 million percent over the "safe for swimming" standard.

Tests on 28 January registered coliform levels measuring as much as 35 million mpn/100ml at the Rajah Soliman outfall or Station 5.

In comparison, Boracay Island's waters tested at 900 mpn/100ml in April 2018 when it was called by President Rodrigo Duterte a "cesspool" and

closed for a six-month rehabilitation.

When Boracay opened in October after the clean-up, its waters tested at 8mpn/100ml, well within the 100mpn/100ml "safe level."

In all, the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) set up eight water quality monitoring stations along Roxas Boulevard, between the United States Embassy and the Manila Yacht Club.

DENR, LLDA continue to shut down polluters.

The latest samples bore substantial drops in bacterial count but are still too high for any contact with humans.

The test results were as follows: Padre Faura (Station 2), 7.9 million MPN/100ml; Station 1 beside the US Embassy, 3,100; Station 3 in front of Diamond Hotel, 7,800; Station 4 at Carpel Shell Export and Museum, 2,400; Station 6 in front of Metrobank near Grand Hotel, 2,400; Station 7 in front of Admiral Hotel, 3,300, and Station 8 across the Quirino Avenue stoplight, 13,000.

With Pat C. Santos



A dose of Vitamin K Mother and baby sun themselves along Roxas Boulevard with the Manila Bay shoreline being closed yesterday by authorities to prevent swimming on polluted waters.



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IT'LL TAKE LONG TO CLEAN UP MANILA BAY

IN his excellent article about the need to clean up the oceans, including Manila Bay, Norwegian Ambassador to the Philippines Bjorn Jahnsen wonders if he will be able to swim in the bay before his tenure ends here in four years' time. ("Saving our Oceans." 2/3/19).

Obviously he's being diplomatic about such a wish, as I reckon it'll take much longer than that to clean up our bay, once famous for its sunsets but now notorious for having become "a toilet that hasn't been flushed in years."

It's been just under 50 years (specifically 1974) when an Australian diplomat and his daughter dove from the Marcos yacht into Manila Bay, to swim as well as water ski with then President Marcos. In his 1997 book "Abiding Interests," the late Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam wrote that it was his assistant, Peter Wilenski, who happened to be in Manila for an Asian Development Bank meeting and was invited by the Marcoses for a day on their yacht, not just to swim but dance with Imelda while two bands played on board.

Today, anyone on a yacht in the bay would need to sail out a few dozen miles, with or without bands playing, to be able to even think of getting into the water!

ISABEL ESCODA,
Cebu City



POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Pushing Manila Bay to its final sunset

Iconic Manila Bay is being smothered and pushed away to its final sunset, another victim not only of pollution, but also of inordinate commercial reclamation masked as progress.

With numerous reclamation projects being rushed by influential businessmen and their patrons in government, the bay loved by generations of Filipinos and foreigners will soon recede farther away from historic Roxas Blvd. as it is buried piecemeal by land developers.



Go and get one last glimpse of the endangered bay before it is taken away literally for interment.

There is no doubt that the bay, which is the virtual septic tank of some 13 million people packed into the 16 cities and one town of Metro Manila, is in bad need of quick rehabilitation. But it also cries for protection from operators poised to make billions by filling up the bay's choice sections.

With the metropolis already heavily built up and almost choking to death, we submit that development planning be redirected to the countryside to decongest and make the national capital more livable, while sharing progress and opportunities with the regions.

There are numerous bays elsewhere suitable for reclamation and development into mixed-use urban communities, freeport zones, sports-tourism sites and logistics hubs. But it seems that politicians and their business partners see in Manila Bay a golden opportunity to make quick millions.

Pamalakaya, a group of fishermen, said that 43 reclamation projects of all sorts will cover more than 32,000 hectares of the 194,400-hectare bay whose waters wash a 190-kilometer coast running through Cavite, Parañaque, Pasay, Manila, Malabon, Navotas, Bulacan, Pampanga and Bataan.

Officials who control the review and approval of commercial reclamation should – to borrow the words of then Socio-economic Secretary Romulo Neri – “moderate their greed” and not rush to pocket payoffs in their waning days in power or in their fund-raising for the May election.

We wonder if the meter would tick faster for gigantic bay projects now that authority for their approval has been funneled to one man – President Duterte – acting through a revamped Philippine Reclamation Authority placed under his direct control.

President Duterte's Executive Order No. 74, whose content was released Monday after news of its issuance broke out, provides:

“The PRA shall be under the control and supervision of the OP, while the power of the President to approve all reclamation projects shall be delegated to the PRA Governing Board. Such delegation, however, shall not be construed as diminishing the President's authority to modify, amend or nullify the action of the PRA Governing Board.”

It is interesting that one bay reclamation project has been awarded to Dennis Uy, a fast-rising star from Davao City described as a crony of the President. His 265-hectare project, called Pasay Harbor City, is estimated to cost P62 billion.

Uy's project reportedly had seen some delay in the National Economic and Development Authority. But under EO-74, reclamation ventures will no longer need NEDA approval but only its opinion as to their being “consistent with national and regional development planning and programming, and government national priorities.”

Malacañang explained that EO-74 will “increase competitiveness, promote ease of doing business, and rationalize and streamline functions of agencies to facilitate efficient delivery of government services.”

The PRA is now required to get the opinion – not approval – of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as to a project's sustainability and compliance with environmental laws, and of the Department of Finance as to its economic and fiscal viability.

Although Duterte had many times voiced vigorous dislike for public bidding, this time his EO-74 requires reclamation projects to undergo competitive public bidding. Malacañang did not explain what or who changed his view.

Meanwhile, the DENR and the Department of Health warn that Manila Bay is heavily polluted, especially with fecal coliform. But beach crowds have taken to the filthy water in the wake of media releases that the administration has cleaned Manila Bay like it did Boracay beach.

Manila officials are excited over big-ticket reclamation, including the 419-hectare Horizon Manila Project carrying a P100-billion tag. In Bulacan, reclamation is also part of the San Miguel Corp. plan to build a P735.63-billion airport-city on a 2,500-hectare bayside site in Bulakan town.

• Reclamation bad for coastal villages

PAMALAKAYA fishermen said through their national chair Fernando Hicap that while they supported the cleanup of the stinking bay, they opposed reclamation that destroys the marine ecosystem and displaces coastal villages.

“This EO-74 will hasten not only the approval of reclamation projects in Manila Bay and throughout the archipelago, but also the destruction of the marine environment and the displacement of fishing communities,” he said.

Hicap cited the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, the first critical habitat to be declared in the country, as among those threatened by haphazard reclamation.

Aside from Horizon Manila Project (419 hectares), a P100-billion proposal backed by Mayor Joseph “Erap” Estrada, various types of reclamation on Manila Bay listed by pro-environment groups include:

Manila Solar City (148 ha), New Manila Bay International Community (407.42 ha), Expansion of Manila Bay North Harbour Center (50 ha) in Tondo, Manila Bay Integrated Flood Control, Coastal Defense and Expressway project (18 ha), Navotas City Coastal Bay (650 ha), Baseco Rehabilitation & Dev't Inc. reclamation (50 ha),

City of Pearl in Baseco (407 ha), PRA Baseco (40 ha), Waterfront Manila Bay (318 ha), SMC's “Aerotropolis” in Bulacan, Bulacan (1,168 ha), Las Piñas-Parañaque Coastal Bay (635 ha), SM Prime Holdings (300 ha and 60 ha), Bacoor City (944 ha), and Cavite Coast on Sangley Point (2,700 ha).

Reclamation projects elsewhere in the country include: Batangas port, Mactan north (400 ha), Coron Bay (50 ha), Mabini (3.50 ha), Bacolod City (125.55 ha), Aklan (2.60 ha), and Cordova Bay (1,500 ha).

ADVISORY: Postscripts are archived at manilamail.com. Author is on Twitter as @FDPascual. Email feedback to fdp333@yahoo.com



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MAKINIG po tayo sa mga tagubilin ng mga awtoridad ukol sa Manila Bay.

Ang tagubilin: bawal maligo, kahit maglakad-lakad at magtampisaw sa lawa.

Lalong bawal ang magmumog at uminom sa tubig-lawa.

Sobra-sobra kasi ang lason ng lawa mula sa mga ebak ng tao, kemikal ng mga pabrika, dumi mula sa mga restoran at bubog mga bote, bakal at lata.

Disgrasya at sakit ang aabutin natin dito.

MUNTIK MAY MAMATAY

Nasa Ospital ng Maynila pa ang isang batang babae na hindi nakinig sa tagubilin.

Sumama siya sa mga nalligo at siya ang tinamaan ng disgrasya.

Muntik siyang nalunod at nakainom ng tubig-lawa.

Ngayon ay Inoobserbahan pa ang kanyang kalagayan makaraang bombilin siya sa nainom niyang tubig.

Sa disgrasyang ito, hindi lang muntik niyang pagkalunod ang problema.

Iniiyakan ngayon ng kanyang mga magulang ang kakapusan kaugnay ng mga gastos sa gamot, doktor at pagpapaspital.

Maging leksyon sa nito sa lahat.

NAKITANG LASON

Lumusong ang mga maninisid ng Metro Manila Development Authority sa lawa, lalo na sa ilang dalampasigan sa kahabaan ng lawa.

Dito nakita ang mga nakabaon pang mga basura.

Sabl ng MMDA, kapag may galaw ang kalikasan, lalo na ang mga alon, kakalkalin nito ang ilalim ng lawa at ilalabas nito ang mga basurang nakalagtag sa sahi.

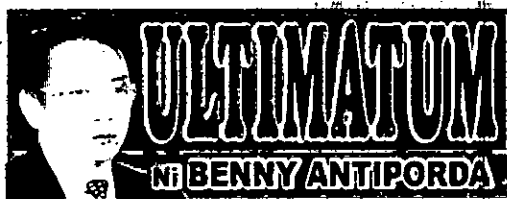
Mga plastik, mga nakabalot na 'di natin alam ang mga laman at maraming iba pa.

Kakalkalin din nito ang mga burak na kinatimbakan ng iba't ibang dumi.

Ibig sabihin ng lahat ng ito na bagama't malinis sa ngayon ang ibabaw at tabing dagat, naririyang ang dumi, lason o polusyon na hindi nakikita ng ating mga mata.

GRABENG LASON, POLUSYON

Napakaraming ilog, sapa, estero, drainage at iba pa na lumuluwa



UMIWAS SA SAKIT, DISGRASYA SA LAWA

sa Manila Bay mula sa Metro Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga at Bataan.

Iniluluwa ng mga ito ang lahat ng uri ng basura mula ebak ng tao hanggang sa mga kemikal at bulok na bagay galing sa mga restoran, hayupan at iba pa.

Kaya gayun na lamang ang dumi o lason o polusyon sa lawa.

Sa pangkalahatan, mga Bro, triple ang dumi ng Manila Bay sa dumi noon ng Boracay.

Kung tinawag noon ni Pangulong Rodrigo 'Duterte' ang Boracay na isang poso negro, tatlong beses na masahol ang Manila Bay.

ANG SUKAT

Sa coliform o bacteria na galing sa dumi lang ng tao at mga hayop, tatlong beses na mas marami sa Manila Bay kaysa Boracay.

Ang Boracay noon, may libo-libo hanggang milyones na coliform bago ito isinara.

Dapat na nasa 100 lang pababa kada milliliter ang coliform sa tubig para ligtas na pagtampisawan, paglanguyan at pagmumugan.

Eh sa Manila Bay, titindig ang iyong balahibo kapag malaman mo kung gaano karumi ito.

Meron itong 330 milyon most probable number kada 100 milliliter.

Heto pa ang matindi.

Ang Balut River, may coliform na 1.9 bilyon, San Antonio da Abad, 1.3B at ang Vitas, 745 milyon.

Paano ang iba pa gaya ng Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando River na sobra ang baho at nangangahulugan na sobra ang dumi nito?

NAGBAWAS NG POLUSYON

Makaraang malinis sa solidong basura ang ilang bahagi ng dalampasigan at mapasara ang ilang restoran, hotel, pagawaan, Manila Zoo at iba pa na nagtatapon ng basura sa lawa, lumilit na nang kaunti ang coliform level.

Pero napakataas pa rin ang polusyon dito.

Kaya nga naririyang ang pagbabawal sa pag-

ligo, pagmumog, pamamasyal ng nakapag at may sugat at iba pa.

KAILANGANG PISIKAL

'Di natin basta mai-larawan ang ugali ng marami sa atin sa harap ng mga pagbabawal.

Siguro dahil nakagisan na nating kalayaan sa lahat ng bagay at walang bawal-bawal.

Sa nakaraang mga araw nga lang, pulis, na mismo ang nagsasaway sa mga nalligo at namamasyal pero halos walang sumusunod.

'Yung iba nga, nakikipagpatintero pa sa mga pulis.

Makaraang makalagpas ang mga pulis sa isang lugar, balikah ang mga matitigas ang ulo sa tubig.

Kaya naisipan na ng mga awtoridad na bakuran ang lawa.

BAKOD NA PLASTIK

Mga plastik ang bigay-y bakod ng lawa mula sa US Embassy hanggang sa Manila Yacht Club.

At nakakabit dito ang mga paalaala na BAWAL ANG LUMUSONG SA LAWA, MALIGO AT IBAPA.

Sana naman, kahit man lang sa Baywalk nakikita ang mga bakod, walang magpatintero at mag-swimming naman sa ibang lugar.

Malawak ang may matinding lason sa lawa at dapat na alalahanin ito.

Sapat na sanang pagmasdan lang muna ang karagatan, jalanghap ng hangin na barilwa at mamasyal sa pagligid.

Darating din ang mga araw na malinis sa lason at basura ang mahal nating karagatang ito.

At doon na tayong pupwedeng magtampisaw at ipagdiwang ang kalayaan nating makipag-ulayaw sa lawa.

oOo

Anomang reaksiyon o reklamo ay maaaring iparating sa 0922340-3333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com



Libreng swimming sa Manila Bay: **'YAN NA NGA, MAY NALUNOD NA!**

GAYA ng pinangangambahan, may isa nang batang nalunod sa paliligo sa Manila Bay sa kabila ng pagsuway ng mga awtoridad na bawal pang mag-swimming sa baybayln.

Mabuti't nasagip at huling iniulat na nasa kritikal sa Ospital ng Maynila ang nalunod na 11-anyos na si "Rhiane", grade 5 student, kamakalawa ng umaga.

Ayon kay SPO2 Mark Xrus Santos ng MPD-Ermita Police Station 5, nitong nakaraang Pebrero 5, bandang 10:15 ng umaga nang magkaroon ng komosyon sa Manila Bay dahil nakilang nalunod ang bata.

Mabuti't may mga taong naroroon na sumagip sa bata at isinugod siya sa ospital.

Sinasabing Inaya ang biktima ng mga kalbigan na mag-swimming sa Manila Bay nang hindi nagpapaalam sa kanyang magulang.

Kaugnay nito, sinabi ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na maglalagay sila ng perimeter fence sa kaha-baan ng beachfront ng Manila Bay upang mapigil ang mga tao sa paliligo rito at mabigyang-daan na rin ang rehabilitation nito.

"We are about to close the swimming area. We did not anticipate the influx of peo-

ple. We are closing the beach front," ang sabi ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu sa Kapihan sa Manila Bay news forum.

Ang bakod ay haharang sa beach front mula sa Manila Yacht Club hanggang sa US Embassy at tatagal ito ng anim na buwan.

"Ang iko-close lang yung tubig but Baywalk will still be open," ang sabi ni Cimatu.

"Makiki pa rin naman ang view ng Manila Bay sunset sa Baywalk. Hindi lang puwede pasukin yung tubig kasi paano ka maglilinis kung may mga nagsi-swimming?" aniya. **RENE CRISOSTOMO**



HUWEBES, PEBRERO 7, 2019 BALITA

BABAKURAN NA

Grade 6 muntik malunod sa Manila Bay

Kasalukuyang inoobserbahan sa ospital ang isang Grade 6 student na muntik nang malunod sa Manila Bay, sa Malate, Maynila, kamakalawa.

Nakaratay sa intensive care unit (ICU) ng Ospital ng Maynila si Rhianna Janiel Soriano, 11, taga-Malate, makaraang makainom ng maraming tubig habang naliligo sa Manila Bay, na malapit lamang sa kanilang tahanan.

Sa ulat ng Manila Police District (MPD), naganap ang insidente sa bahaging Manila Bay, na matatagpuan sa Roxas Boulevard, sa Malate, bandang 5:00 ng hapon.

Nagkayayaan umano ang biktima at kanyang mga kaibigan na maligo kaya nagtungo roon nang hindi nagpapaalam sa kanyang inang si Marivic.

Gayunman, muntik nang malunod ang biktima nang makainom ng tubig at agad na iniahon ng ilang concerned citizen at isinugod sa ospital.

Dahil dito, nagdesisyon na ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila at ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na bakuran ang paligid ng Manila Bay. "Maglalagay tayo ng bakod na temporary habang nire-rehabilitate

itong karagatan," ayon kay Benny Antiporda, undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns ng DENR.

FECAL COLIFORM CONTENT, BUMABA NA

Ipinahayag ng DENR na malaki na ang ipinagbago ng kalidad ng tubig sa Manila Bay, dahil na rin sa pagbaba ng antas ng fecal coliform content nito.

Sa pulong balitaan sa Maynila, inamin ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu na marumi pa rin ang tubig sa Manila Bay, ngunit ipinagmalaki na malaki na ang inilinis nito sa ngayon.

Aniya, bago ang isinagawang clean-up drive, umaabot sa 330 million Most Probable Number (MPN) ang fecal coliform content sa bahagi ng Padre Faura sa Ermita.

Gayunman, base umano sa pinakahuling laboratory analysis sa waste water samples dito ay natuklasang bumaba nito sa 7.9 million MPN.

Sa kabila nito, binigyang-diin ng DENR na mahigpit pa ring ipinagbabawal ang paglilig sa Manila Bay.

Mary Ann Santiago



07 FEB 2010

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GRADE 6 NALUNOD SA MANILA BAY

GINAGAMOT sa Ospital ng Maynila (OSMA), ang Grade 6 pupil matapos malunod sa Manila Bay, kamakalawa ng hapon sa Roxas Blvd., Manila.

Nakaratay sa intensive care unit ang biktimang si Rhianne Janiel Soriano, 11, ng Malate, Manila. Ayon kay Marivic, ina ng dalagita, nalaman na lamang niya ang sinapit ng anak nang ipaalam ito sa kanya ng mga kaibigan nito na kasama niyang naligo sa Baywalk, alas-5:00 ng hapon.

Hindi umano nagpaalam sa kanya ang anak na pupunta sa Baywalk na malapit lamang sa kanilang tinitirhan.

Naligo pa rin ang biktima at mga kaibigan nito sa kabila ng pagbabawal ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila ang paglangoy at paliligo sa Manila Bay.

Nang masagip ang bata, nagsuka umano ito at matigas ang katawan.

Ayon kay Marivic, huwag siyang husgahan dahil hindi naman niya gusto ang nangyari sa anak at pabor din ito na lagyan ng bakod ang Manila Bay para hindi na ito mapaliguan ng mga bata. Kasabay nito, nanawagan din

si Marivic ng pinansiyal na tulong para sa pagpagamot ng anak. Samantala, bumaba na umano ang level ng fecal coliform content ng tubig ng Manila Bay.

Ito ang inianunsiyo ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Gayunman, sa kabila na malaki ang inilinis ng tubig-dagat sa Manila Bay, nananatili pa rin itong marumi.

Ani Cimatu, malaki ang naitulong ng pagsasara ng Manila Zoo, na nadiskubreng dumidiretso pala sa estero ang dumi.

(Mylene Alfonso)



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HUWEBES / PEBRERO 7, 2019

EDITOR: Elvie Altez / Twitter: @elviealtez

Grade 6 nalunod sa Manila Bay

INOBSERBAHAN ngayon sa Ospital ng Maynila (OSMA) ang isang grade 6 student matapos malunod sa Manila Bay kamakalawa nang hapon.

Nakaratay sa intensive care unit ng nasabing ospital ang 11-anyos na biktima.

Ayon kay Marivic Soriano, ina ng biktima, nalaman na lamang niya ang sinapit ng anak nang ipaalam ito sa kanya ng mga kaibigan ng anak na kasamang naligo sa Baywalk dakong alas-singko nang hapon.

Hindi umano nagpaalam sa kanya ang anak na pupunta sa Baywalk na malapit lamang sa kanilang tinitirhan sa Malate, Maynila.

Naligo ang biktima at ang kanyang mga kaibigan sa kabila ng ipinagbabawal ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila ang pagligo sa Manila Bay dahil hindi pa ito ganap na malinis.

Nang masagip ang biktima ay nagsusuka umano ito at matigas ang katawan.

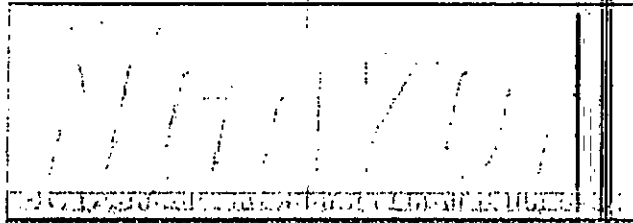
Ayon kay Marivic, huwag si-

yang husgahan dahil hindi naman niya gusto ang nangyari sa anak.

Pabor din umano ang ginang na lagyan ng bakod ang Manila Bay para hindi na ito mapaliguan ng mga bata.

Kasabay nito, nananawagan din si Marivic ng pinansiyal na tulong para sa pagpapagamot sa kanyang anak.

Naglagay na kahapon ang pamahalaang lokal ng Maynila ng babala na ipinagbabawal ang maligo at lumangoy sa Manila Bay. **(Juliet de Loza-Cudia)**



11-anyos nasagip sa pagkalunod sa Manila Bay

Naagapan mula sa pagkalunod ang isang 11-anyos na batang babae na kasalukuyang nasa Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU) ng Ospital ng Maynila dahil sa paliligo sa Manila Bay sa Roxas Boulevard, kamakalawa ng hapon.

Nang masagip, tumigas na umano ang katawan at nagsusuka nang maputik na tubig-dagat ang biktimang si Rhianne Janiel Soriano, grade 6 pupil at residente ng Malate, Maynila.

Kasama umano ng mga kaibigan ang biktima nang magtungo sa baywalk at maligo sa Manila Bay at hindi nagpaalam sa ina. Bandang alas-5:00 ng hapon nang malaman ng inang si Marvic ang nangyari sa anak.

Kamakalawa (Martes) ay agad namang inaksyunan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pangyayari at inutos ang pagpapakabod at pagbabawal sa pagliligo sa kahabaan ng

Manila Bay.

Sa kabila ng panawagan ng mga awtoridad na hindi ligtas maligo sa Manila Bay dahil sa taglay na pollution ng tubig kahit sumailalim na sa clean-up ay dinagsa ng magkakasunod na araw ng publiko ang lugar para mag-swimming.

Partikular ang maburak pa rin at mga basura na nasa sea bed na hindi nakikita sa ibabaw ng tubig na kailangang isailalim sa paglilinis. (Ludy Bermudo)



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@lacorte_jen

HUWEBES / PEBRERO 7, 2019

Villar kay Duterte sa Manila Bay reclamation:

HANDS OFF SA BALWARTE NAMIN!

KINONTRA ng bilyonaryong si Senador Cynthia Villar ang isinusulong ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Hinala ni Villar, asawa ng isa sa pinakamayaman sa bansa at real estate tycoon na si Manny Villar, posibleng mauwi lamang sa reclamation ang isinasagawang paglilinis sa Manila Bay.

Kapag nangyari ito, nagbabala ang senadora na lalabanan niya ang sinumang magtatangkang tabunan ang Las Piñas-Parañaque wetland park para ibukas sa mga negosyante bilang reclamation area.

Ang Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area ay matatagpuan sa unang tollgate ng Cavite Southbound na siyang parte rin ng paglilinis sa Manila Bay.

Ani Villar, haharangin nito ang anumang reclamation proposal at ipe-preserba nito ang kanyang parke.

"Basta ako ipe-preserve ko ang Las Piñas-Parañaque wetland park, any desire na sirain 'yun, lalaban ako," ani Villar sa isang ambush interview sa Baseco Compound sa Tondo noong Martes.

Dapat ding linawin ng gobyerno, ani Villar, ang mga polisiyang ibinababa sa local government units (LGUs) nang sa gayon ay maintindihan ang tunay na kahihinatnan ng Manila Bay.

"Gusto mong lalinis ang Manila Bay tapos ja-allow mo ang reclamation. Eh bakit mo pa lilinisin kung tatabunan-mo lang din naman? I cannot understand, they should be clear on their policies," dagdag nito. **(Anne Lorraine Gamo)**



BAWAL lumangoy --- Isang malaking karatula ang sasalubong sa mga pumapasyal sa Manila Bay na ipinaskil dahil sa pagdagsa ng mga tao nitong mga nakaraang araw gayong isinasagawa ang paglilinis sa baybayin. *(Jonas Sulit)*



Manila, Pasay reclamation project walang go signal ng DENR

Tiniyak kahapon ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu na ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ay hindi para bigyang-daan ang mga reclamation project dito.

"Walang reclamation, we are just implementing the December 2008 mandamus of the Supreme Court to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay and there is no component for reclamation," pagtiyak ni Cimatu.

Tungkol sa apat na reclamation project na pinasok ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila at Pasay City kung saan nakapaglagda na ng Memorandum of Agreement, tiniyak ni Cimatu na bagama't mayroon nang MOA ay wala pa namang go signal dito ang national government at wala pang inisyu na clearance ang DENR.

"So far none of the projects has received notice to proceed from the government. DENR mission is to rehabilitate Manila Bay and the clean-up is not being done in preparation of any reclamation project," ani Cimatu.

Bago pa sinimulan ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ay nagkaroon na ng MOA ang mga pamahalaang lokal ng Maynila at Pasay para sa apat na reclamation project. (Tina Mendoza)



SPECIAL REPORT

Katas ng basura malaking hamon sa Manila Bay rehab

(Last part)

SA datos ng Manila Bay Inter-agency Task Force, tanging 35 porsiyento lamang ng 43 nainspeksiyon na mga hotel ang sumusunod sa pamantayan, samantalang pitong hotel ay wala kahit isang sewerage treatment facility.

Mula sa 285 komersyal na establisimyento na sinuri ng DENR, 59 lamang ang may planta ng sewerage treatment habang 120 ay walang treatment facility.

Kung ganito ang lumabas sa kanilang mga inspeksiyon sa mga establisimyento, ay asahan na maglalabas ang DENR ng mas maraming kautusan ng pagpapasara ng mga establisimyento sa mga susunod na araw, ayon naman kay DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu.



Anti-littering enforcers ipinakalat sa Manila Bay

Upang mapangalagaan ang kalinisan sa Manila Bay, nagtalaga ang MMDA ng anti-littering enforcers na siyang magbabantay sa lugar sa sinumang mga taong magkakalat.

Titiyakin ng mga enforcer na ang kahaabaan ng baybayin ay mananatiling malinis mula sa basura, kasunod ng puspusang paglilinis nito.

Simula Enero 29 hanggang Pebrero 4, ang naturang ahensiya ay nakahili na ng kabuuang 17 litterbugs. Kasabay ng babala ng mga opisyal na ang mahuhuling magtatapon ay pagmumultahin ng P500 o magbibigay ng community service.

Ang bagong polisiya ay inihayag kasunod ng pagsusulong ng gobyerno para sa rehabilitasyon ng world-famous sunset viewing site.

Kailangan sa rehabilitasyon ang relokasyon sa libong illegal settlers, na ang kanilang mga basura ay nakakapag-ambag ng 70 porsiyento ng polusyon sa lugar, na unang inihayag ng tagapagsalita ng DENR na si Jonas Leones.

Makikita sa resulta ng water sampling sa lugar na ang average fecal coliform level sa Manila Bay ay 330 million most probable number (mpn); 3.3 million times na mataas sa standard na 100 mpn na maari para makapag-swimming.



MAKABAYAN UMEPAL SA MANILA BAY

KAHIT isa sa limang nagdaang gobyerno ay walang ginawa ukol sa polusyon ng Manila Bay. Wala ni isa sa limang dating Pangulo ang nagpahayag ng pagkabahala sa tuluyang pagkasira ng makasaysayang dagat na ito.

Ang liderato lang ni Duterte ang nagbigay-araan na marinig ang boses ng ordinaryong tao na humiling na sagipin ang Manila Bay mula sa tuluyang pagkamatay nito.

Kahit na ang mga maiingay na progresibong grupo tulad ng Makabayan Partylist ay walang-imik ukol sa environmental degradation hanggang sa ilunsad ang "Battle for Manila Bay" rehabilitation program noong isang linggo.

Tinututulan ng Makabayan at iba pang makakaliwang kampo ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay dahil mapapaalis at mawawalan ng kabuhatan ang informal settlers.

Anti-poor daw ang rehab program kaya iginilit nilang itigil o suspendihin ito. Dapat konsultahin ang mga iskwater.

Napakababaw at 'di makatwiran ang kadahilanan ng kanilang pag-alma. Kung mayroon palang pumasok sa bakuran nang may bakuran, dapat pang magpaliwanag pa bago mapaalis iyon.

Ang Manila Bay ay 'di lang pasyalan na may magandang tanawin. Iyan ay isang malaking "economic zone" na bu-



mabaybay sa tatlong rehiyon kasama ang Metro Manila.

Isang kabulastugan ang pagpapatigil sa rehabilitasyon dahil kawawa naman ang mga iskwater na nagdudumi rito at nangangalakang mga basura na humahampas sa seawall ng Roxas Blvd.

Sobrang dami ng dumi ang napupunta sa look na ito galing sa daan-daang establishments, mga lokalidad at pati na mga barko na nagtatapon ng dumi, isang paglabag sa Clean Water Act of 2004.

Nauunawaan natin ang

karapatang mabuhay ng mga iskwater ngunit karamihan sa kanila ang paulit-ulit nang nabigyan ng reloasyon at cash assistance pero pabalik-balik lang sa pag-liskwater.

Milyon-milyong stakeholder ang makikinabang sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay.

Fake news ang sinasabing pakana ng gobyerno na isulong ang reclamation projects diyan.

Sa tingin ko, umeepal lang ang ilang lider ng Makabayan Partylist na kumakandidato sa darating na eleksyon.



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MANILA BAY REHAB

MAKARAAN ang ilang taong hindi pagkilos ng mga presidente mula kina Ferdinand Marcos, Cory Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada, Gloria Arroyo at Noynoy Aquino, ngayon ay nalalapas na ng Manila Bay ang tunay na paglilinis. Malayo talaga ang

performance ngayon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte kumpara sa mga dating presidente na tinatapanan ng mga basura ang dagat at sakà isang populutin habang gumigiling ang kamera. Higit isang linggo na ang nakaraan, umarangkada na ang

paglilinis sa Manila Bay.

Sa pangunguna ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at ilang pribadong sektor, nagkaroon pa ng ilang seremonya para ipakita ang dibdibang paglilinis sa makasaysayang lawa.

Pinagpupulot ang mga inanod na basura na karamihan ay plastik.

Kapag nalinis na nang tuluyan ang Manila Bay, puwede na raw itong paliguan.

Unang ipinasara ang Manila Zoo na sinasabing isa sa mga nagpaparumi sa tubig.

Isinusuka raw kasi

ang zoo sa lawa ang dumi mula rito.

Tinatayang 330 milyon ang fecal coliform sa tubig na nangangahulugang napakarumi ng Manila Bay at hindi puwedeng languyan o gawing paliguan.

Daig pa ng dumi sa lawa ang Boracay na dating tinawag na 'cesspool' ni Pangulong Duterte kaya ikinasa agad ang anim na buwang reabilitasyon dito.

Ngayong malinis na malinis na ang Bora, balik ang sigla ng isla.

Malaon nang problema sa Metro Manila ang basura at ang dumi

sa mga imburnal na dumadaloy hindi lamang sa panahon ngayon kundi sa buong taon sa pamamagitan ng maraming daluyan ng tubig na dumidiretso sa ilog Pasig at papunta sa Manila Bay.

Mas lumalala pa ito tuwing umuulan.

Subalit panahon man ng tag-ulan o hindi, patuloy ang pagbagsak ng polusyon sa mga daluyan ng tubig.

Ilang araw pa lamang mula nang ilunsad ng DENR ang reabilitasyon, araw-araw nang dagsa ang tao rito.

(Sundan sa pahina 14)

WALANG SINASANTO...

(Mula sa pahina 5)

Napapakamot na lamang tuloy sa ulo si Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda dahil may mga nagkakalat pa rin.

Naging dahilan ito upang bakuran na ng mga awtoridad ang Manila Bay kasunod ng pagdami ng mga naliligo o nag-swimming sa katubigan.

Sabi nga ni Usec. Antiporda, binakuran ang Baywalk sa Roxas Boulevard na sasakop mula US Embassy hanggang Manila Yacht Club gamit ang mga orange barrier at ilang mga karagdang senyales.

Batay sa mga nakikitang dumi mula sa lawa, napakalayo pa ng lalakbayin ng reabilitasyon efforts ng gobyerno.

Nakatutuwa nga lang isipin na ilang araw pa lamang ang itinatakbo ng ginagawang paglilinis ay nagbubunga na agad ito.

Sinasabing aabot P47 bilyon ang tinatayang gagastusin sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay.

Balewala naman daw ang bilyones na ito sapagkat kukunin naman ang pondo sa 'Road User's Tax'.

Nawawaldas lang daw kasi o hindi nagamit sa tama ang pera kaya nanganganib din na mabuwag ang Road Board.

Habang isinasagawa ang Manila Bay rehab, dapat ding habulin at kasuhan ang mga nakaupo sa Board na dupang sa yaman.

ooo

Si Alex Santos ay broadcaster sa mga programa ng DWIZ 882 tulad ng Ratsada Balita tuwing alas-6 ng umaga, IZ Balita Nationwide Pang-umagang edisyon (7am-8am) at kasalukuyang host ng public service program sa PTV 4, ang KILOS PRONTO, tuwing alas 4 y medya hanggang alas-5 y medya ng hapon, Lunes hanggang Biyernes. Mapanonood ninyo rin ako sa PTV NEWS araw-araw dakong ala-6 ng gabi. Ipadala ang inyong komento at reaksiyon sa lupaxsantos1@yahoo.com o puwede ninyo akong i-follow sa twitter account @iamalexsantos.



HUWEBES / PEBRERO 7, 2019

SPY ON THE JOB



Rey Marfil

TWITTER @dsppyrey

Kung mayroon man tayong good news na nangyari nitong nakaraang mga araw mga tsong, isa na rito ang sinasabing paglinis sa Manila Bay at pagbabalik ng mga isda sa Pasig river.

Sa totoo lang naman, kahit ang mga nagdaang mga administrasyon ay nagkaroon din ng mga clean-up drive sa dalawang uri ng katubigang ito. Iyon isa nga lang, hindi naman makikita agad-agad ang resulta. Gaya sa Manila Bay na sadyang mahirap linisinang bongga

at todo dahil sa lawak at mga iba't ibang lugar na panggagalingan ng mga basurang napupunta rito.

Sabi nga ng ilang opisyal, karaniwang "malinis" ang Manila Bay kapag panahon ng amihan gaya ngayon dahil palabas ang alon. Ibig sabihin, kung may batang eebak sa batuhan ng look na ito, asahan na mapapadpad palayo ng Manila Bay ang ebak. Iyan siguro ang nangyayari sa mga basura ngayon sa tubig.

Pero siyempre, malaking tulong pa rin ang clean-up drive na ginagawa ngayon dahil nahahakot ang mga natenggang basura. Binomba pa ang mga batuhan para maaalis ang mga kumapit na langis at putik, at tila nagkaroon ng buhangin sa ilang bahagi ng dalampasigan.

Ngunit pagdating ng habagat season o panahon ng tag-ulan, malalaman natin kung mababawasan ang mga basurang mapapadpad sa Manila Bay dahil sa panahon ito ay papasok na ang alon. Huwag nating asahan mga tsong na mawawala na ang mga maaanod na tone-toneladang basura pero ipagdasal natin na sana ay mabawasan.

Bago natin malaman kung madami pa ring basura sa Manila Bay sa panahon ng tag-ulan, hayaan natin ang mga kababayan natin na mag-enjoy sa "Manila Bay beach" sa darating na summer season kahit sinasabing hindi pa rin ligtas ang tubig nito para paliguan.

Kung hindi naman mapipigilan ang mga kababayan natin na maligo, maglagay sana

ng mga life guard ang mga kinauukulang ahensiya at lokal na pamahalaan para maiwasan ang disgrasya. Wala rin sanang kolokoy na magkakamaling maniningil ng entrance fee at baka gulpi ang abutin niya.

Sabi ng ating kurimaw na hindi marunong lumangoy, malalaman daw kung talagang malinis na ang tubig ng Manila Bay kapag may nakita nang pating na umaali-aligid sa look.

Samantala, sabi pa ng ating kurimaw, malalaman naman daw kung talagang malinis na ang tubig sa Pasig River kapag may nakita na uling buwaya na lumalangoy sa ilog. Sa mga nauna kasing kuwento gaya ng libro ni Jose Rizal, nabanggit nito na may buwaya sa ilog Pasig.

Dekada 90s nang ideklara na patay na ang Ilog Pasig dahil sa sobrang dumi ng tubig at wala na raw isdang maaaring mabuhay. Bunga raw kasi ito ng mga duming itinatapon sa ilog ng mga pabrika at mga establisimyento sa paligid ng ilog. Idagdag pa ang mga ebak at kung ano-anong pinaghugasan ng mga residenteng nakatira sa gilid ng ilog.

Hiling ng ating kurimaw, magtuloy-tuloy raw sana ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay at Pasig River. Alisin ang mga dapat alisin at obligahin ang mga dapat obligahin na ayusin ang pagtatapon nila ng waste water at mga dumi. Kapag nga naman gumanda na ang dalawang katubigang ito, ang mga Pinoy din naman ang makikinabang.



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PHILIPPINE DAILY
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HATAW!

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SORPRESANG pinuntahan ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu ang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay nakailan lang ay ipinagbawal na ang paliligo at nakatakdang isara sa publiko matapos malunod ang isang batang naliligo sa baybayin. (BONG SON)



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Remate

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

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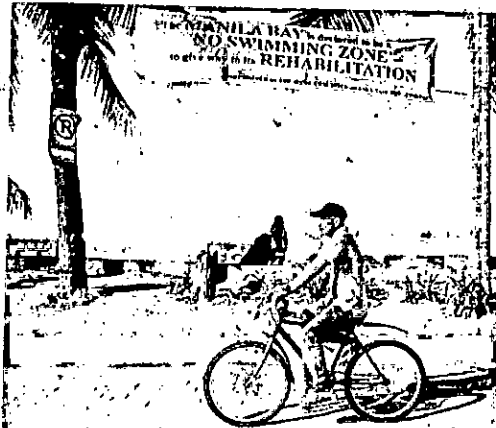
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DAHIL marami pa ring pasaway at patuloy na nagsu-swimming sa Manila Bay ay naglagay na ang pamahalaan ng Lungsod ng Maynila ng pakiusap na bawal ang paliligo sa baybayin.

JHUN MABANAG

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Website: bandera.inquirer.net
Twitter: @bandera_inquirer
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3

BINABALAN ng mga pulis ang mga bumibisita sa Baywalk sa Maynila na bawal maligo sa Manila Bay. Kamakailan ay isang batang babae ang natunod sa look at kasalukuyang kritikal sa ospital. INQUIRER



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- SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN -

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Ang larawan ng signage ang mga tauhan ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) na nagbabawal sa pagligo sa lawa habang patuloy ang rehabilitasyon dito.

Kuha ni **NORMAN ARAGA**



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HATAWA!

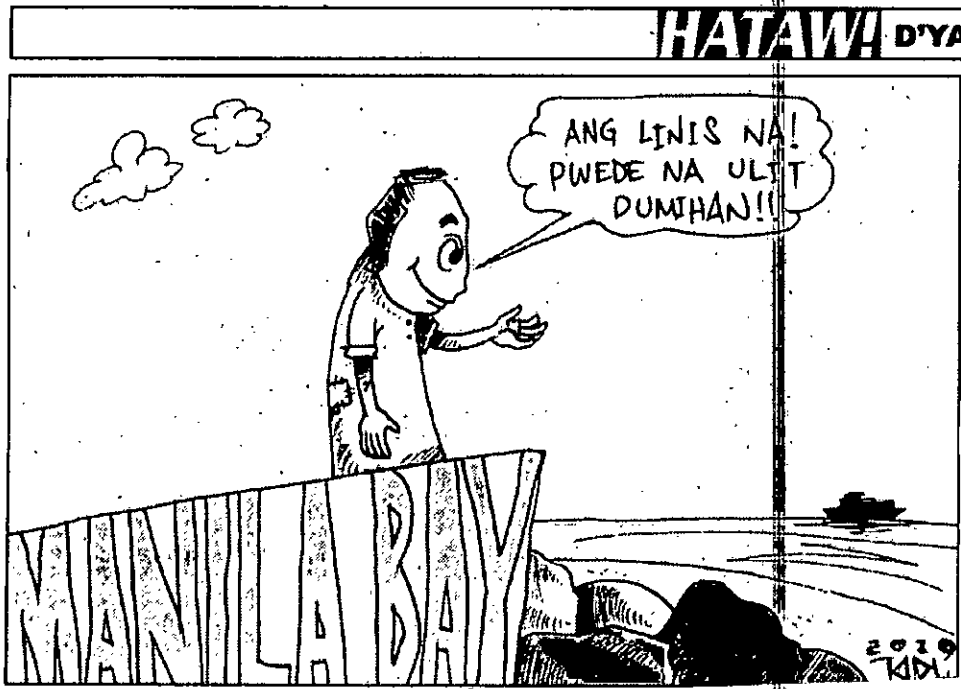
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WORKER clean up San Juan River in Kalentong, Mandaluyong last April 19, 2018.



DENR enlists top businessmen for river rehabilitation projects

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is in discussions with businessmen Ramon S. Ang and Lucio C. Tan, Sr. for possible cooperation in river clean-ups around Metro Manila to support the government's Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

"We are still doing technical consultations in which they expressed the intention [of] cleaning up the major rivers," Sherwin S. Rigor, DENR Undersecretary, told reporters in Malate on Wednesday.

"The rivers will be inspected," Mr. Rigor said.

"For the project with Lucio Tan, we are going to choose," Mr. Rigor said, and noted that Mr. Ang, President and CEO of San Miguel Corp., will be assigned to clean up the Tullahan River.

The river traverses northern Quezon City, Valenzuela and Malabon, emptying into Manila Bay.

Mr. Rigor said during the Kapihan sa Manila Bay forum held in Cafe Adriatico that the DENR has not yet appointed contractors for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay since the budget department has not allocated funds for the project.

According to Mr. Rigor, the DENR is relying on government equipment for now to facilitate the cleanup.

"We do not have any contractors yet. We are relying on our own," Mr. Rigor said.

Meanwhile, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said that the department will fence off a segment of the Manila Bay shore to discourage the use of the swimming areas and beachfront.

"We are about to close the swimming area. We did not anticipate the influx of people. We are closing the beachfront," Mr. Cimatu said in the same briefing.

"Baywalk will still be open," he said, referring to the bay shoreline on Roxas Boulevard between the US

Embassy and the Manila Yacht Club, where the proposed fence will go up. "How can we clean if there are people swimming there?" Mr. Cimatu said.

According to Mr. Cimatu, the fecal coliform content of Manila Bay has fallen significantly to 7.5 million most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliters (ml) from 330 million MPN per 100 ml at the start of the cleanup, though the water is still unsafe for swimming.

The fence is expected to be built in the next three days.

Meanwhile, a sewage treatment plant will be built beside the Manila Yacht Club to clean the water from three esteros in Manila before draining into Manila Bay, Mr. Cimatu said.

Mr. Cimatu added that there are no approved reclamation projects yet in the area and every project, before being approved, needs to secure an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) from the DENR.

"The process of applying for reclamation projects in Manila Bay must go through the DENR for the ECC. They should be compliant with environmental laws (such as the) Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Solid Waste Management Act," Mr. Cimatu said.

"As of now there is no approval for any reclamation. Nothing has been approved," he added.

Mr. Cimatu is also confident that the rehabilitation project will go ahead, despite calls from some legislators to postpone the program and decide what to do with the informal settlers.

"I can't see a good project being discontinued," Mr. Cimatu said.

According to Mr. Cimatu, the DENR is requesting a P45 billion budget to effect the transfer of informal settlers. — **Reicelene Joy N. Ignacio**



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Cebu needs to integrate river basin management plan

By MINERVA BC NEWMAN

CEBU CITY – Cebu needs to update its Central Cebu River Basin (CCRMB) Master Plan to make it more responsive to present conditions.

In a recent meeting, the Central Cebu River Basin Management Council (CCRBMC) agreed that the plan was crafted in 2011 and there had since been major developments that must be looked into.

Maria Dianne Rallon, Senior Project and Development Officer of the Watershed and Environment Division of the Metro Cebu Water District (MCWD), said the previous plans had a lot of data gaps.

“There is a greater need today to

work on the integration and updating of the master plan of the Cebu river basins especially in the aspects of improving the sewage and solid waste, access to water, sanitation and other higher generation developments,” Rallon said.

He said several meetings, consultations and interviews had been conducted to improve the plan by integrating it with the plans and programs of other concerned agencies.

Rallon told the Manila Bulletin the following concerns must be addressed:

- Water Resources Management
- Watershed Management Flood Control/Mitigation
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Hazards Management
- Wetland Management (to include

rivers, river deltas, marshlands and coastal areas)

- Economic Development Plan and Institutional Linkages and Organizational Structure for River Basin Management

Rallon said this plan has a budget of P36,047,622 and covers 678.7 square kilometers in the cities of Cebu, Danao, Mandaue and Talisay and the towns of Asturias, Balamban, Compostela, Consolacion, Liloan, and Minglanilla.

According to Rallon, the CCRBMC is a multi-stakeholder organization composed of government mandated agencies concerned with developing an integrated river basins management using the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles.



Review: Pasig River rehab



POP GOES THE WORLD
JENNY ORTUOSTE

(around P232 million last year, with 48 percent of that or P112 million going to fund the agency's Riverbanks Development and Flood Control Program).

The agency also lacks police powers to penalize the commercial and individual violators of water pollution and waste management laws, showing there is a need to revamp its outdated charter, Executive Order No. 54.

The agency has heavy responsibilities. "Its river rehabilitation and management model," explained PRRC Information Officer Alyssa Micalat, "includes housing and resettlement [of informal settlers]; riverbank, transportation and tourism development; flood control; environmental management; and public information and advocacy programs."

"If there are no clean rivers, what do we go rollin' on?"

The rehoming of informal settlers is particularly important because it is estimated that 65 percent of the waste thrown into the Pasig River comes from their communities. Micalat said that from 1999 to 2018, the PRRC relocated almost 20,000 informal settler families living along the river, "many of [whom] were even residing over the estuaries and creeks and tons of garbage that [had] piled [up] underneath their makeshift houses."

Today the river is home to more than a hundred species of fish, birds, trees, and water plants. "People now fish, travel, and do exercise along the Pasig River and its [47] tributaries," said Micalat.

In Oct. 2018, the Pasig River beat the Yangtze River to be recognized by the International River Foundation as the 1st Asia Riverprize awardee at an international competition held in Sydney. The judges, Micalat said, "were really impressed with the scale of the problems the Pasig River faced and the scale of the response initiated by the PRRC."

The PRRC seeks to engage public help for its river rehabilitation efforts through its Pusong Para sa Ilog-Pasig campaign. It

Turn to A5

Review...

From A4

informs and educates people through immersion and induction activities for various age groups.

"Immersion activities," said Micalat, "involve a brief orientation about the rehabilitation model of the PRRC and what the [public] can do to help revive the Pasig River, followed by a visit to our livelihood center in BASECO or an estero tour and then cleanup."

"In the communities," she added, "people near the esteros... are oriented on their duties in the maintenance of the rehabilitated tributaries and linear parks as well as how to do proper segregation [of waste]."

There is still more work to do, so the

PRRC, in collaboration with UP Planades, designed the Pasig River Integrated and Strategic Master Plan. Its goal is that by 2032, the Pasig River and its surrounding basins will be resilient life-sustaining ecosystems, through restoration strategies including management of water quality, stream flow, and catchments.

Perhaps by then, and hopefully much sooner, the Pasig River will be as clean or cleaner than it was during Jose Rizal's time, and we will see along its banks the fishermen, boatmen, and bathers that he once saw.

The song 'Proud Mary' goes "Rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river..." If there are no clean rivers, what do we go rollin' on? FB and Twitter: @DrJennyO

THE Manila Bay cleanup reminds us of other waterways that need to be rehabilitated, among them the Pasig River.

The river used to be an essential part of people's lives. They washed and bathed in it, drew drinking water from it for themselves and their domestic animals, fished in it, and sailed along its 25-kilometer (16-mile) length from Laguna de Bay to Manila Bay. All kinds of goods were transported along it. And during the colonial period the stately homes of wealthy people were built along its banks, among them Malacañang Palace.

The river figures in the first line of Jose Rizal's 'El Filibusterismo': "One December morning the steamship Tabo struggled upstream along the winding Pasig, carrying a great number of passengers to the province of La Laguna."

In that same chapter Rizal refers to the river's busy life in the late 19th century, with "barges, boats, and coconut rafts of the natives" plying the river, and "laundresses and bathers on the river banks."

From the 1950s onward, industrial pollution, negligence, and poor waste management methods exacerbated by the proliferation of factories and the influx of informal settlers took their toll on the river, and in 1990 it was declared biologically dead.

Among the groups trying to bring the river back to life is the government's Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

Created in 1999, the agency's mission (as posted on its website) is "to transform Pasig River and its environs into a showcase of a new quality of urban life," with the goal of restoring "river water quality to Class C level."

Class C water quality means water that can sustain fishes and other aquatic life, and support "secondary recreations like boating, and water for manufacturing processes after treatment."

Led by its Executive Director Jose Antonio "Pepeton" Goitia, PRRC tries its best to fulfill its duties despite a shortage of manpower (and of its 200 workers only about 20 have plantilla positions) and an inadequate budget



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Pig poo pouring into Batangas Bay

Pinoys and Chinoys celebrated the Chinese New Year of the Pig two days ago with the porcine icon in the mind of most everybody, especially the self-styled seers, soothsayers and their believers. So it is just as apropos to call attention to pigs in another context. Not the lawmakers' pork barrel issue this time, but pig excrement being poured into waterways, not by the pigs themselves, but by businessmen who raise them for profit and in the process defiling the environment. Picture rivers laden with pig and chicken shit draining into the sea.

Much has been said about the overdue rehab of the "toilet bowl" that is Manila Bay that began last week, and the cleanup of the rivers and creeks that pour polluted, toxic water into that historic body of water, site of battles and source of romantic inspirations—notwithstanding the foulness of it—because of the awesome sheen it lends to the famous Manila sunset.

Adjacent to Manila Bay is Batangas Bay, which could be just as toxically laden because of the pig and chicken shit dumped into the rivers that flow into it. It is not that nobody noticed and complained, there was just no tough action by the local government units (LGUs) for a long time.

It took a Facebook page on traffic monitoring in Batangas to rattle LGUs and call the attention of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). But I am going ahead of the story.

Years ago, I wrote about a close friend who was in trouble with the Bureau of Internal Revenue because she had refused to pay her taxes for four years in a row. Batangueña farmer-environmentalist and former Good Shepherd sister Emma Alday worked very, very hard to clean up rivers and water-



HUMAN FACE

MA. CERES P. DOYO

ways in her hometown of San Jose.

I had seen for myself the efforts she had put into her advocacy, which came out in print and broadcast media. (She is chair of Susi Foundation and, at one time, a frustrated town councilor.) Her complaint had to do with Malaquing Tubig, the town's natural spring, into which pig and chicken manure were being dumped.

My friend did write a stinging letter to the district revenue officer to explain why she refused to pay business tax "to a government that does not care about the health of the people." I ran her letter in this space. Too long to explain here how it got resolved, but suffice it to say that it was one for the books! But pollution continued.

Recently, a team from the DENR responded to the complaint on Facebook of the Bantay Trapiko sa Batangas on the pollution of the Calumpang River caused by piggeries. The river is a "principal river joined by many tributaries such as Malaquing Ilog, Sabang, and Ibaan rivers draining (from) the municipalities of San Jose, Ibaan, Taysan and Padre

Garcia and the cities of Lipa and Batangas." It is sometimes called the "Nile of Batangas."

The team's report said that, as of 2017, the Calumpang River had "significantly exceeded the guidelines for ammonia, biochemical oxygen demand, chloride and dissolved oxygen. Coliform concentration in Calumpang has "greatly exceeded the DENR criteria for Class C. This can be accounted to an increase in anthropological activity around the rivers which may lead to an increase in domestic wastes." Anthropological, meaning human, as journalists would simply write in this case. (Batangueños' remark: *Ala, e!*)

The report adds that Calumpang River falls under Class C, which is supposed to be beneficial for (1) fishery, that is, propagation and growth of fish and other aquatic life; (2) recreation, e.g. boating; and (3) industrial water supply.

The DENR did conduct a survey of 95 firms without discharge permits and, in December 2018, of piggery owners in Cuenca town. The dismal results are too technical to mention here, but "commitments/agreements" with LGUs of Lipa, Batangas, Rosario and San Jose have been made for these LGUs to conduct monthly water quality monitoring and analysis. They shall also submit the list of industries in their areas and validate their discharge permits.

The Philippine Clean Water Act requires all firms to have a discharge permit. The report that I have does not describe "proper" and "improper" discharge.

Batangas Bay's case should be no different from Manila Bay's that Mother Nature's warriors brought before the Supreme Court and won.

Send feedback to cerespd@gmail.com.



Remate

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

486 COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS GUMAGAMIT NG ILLEGAL DEEP WELLS, IPINASARA NG NWRB

HIGIT pang paigtingin 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.

"Sa taong 2019, umaasa ako sa binitawan kong mensahe sa mga nagkasala at sa publiko na seryoso ang ahensiya sa pagpapatupad ng batas, panuntunan at regulasyon sa kapaligiran" 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

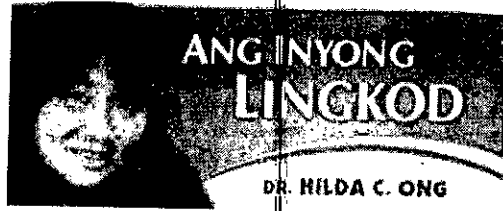
mga nagawa sa kanyang pinamumunuang ahensiya.

Ayon kay Cimatu, maituturing na "centerpiece" para sa taong 2018 ang rehabilitasyon ng Boracay na pinamuan ng DENR kasama ng iba pang ahensiya ng gobyerno sa ilalim ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BI-ATF):

"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



DR. HILDA C. ONG

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 dumim 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.

Bukod sa matagumpay na rehabilitasyon ng Boracay, sinabi pa ni Cimatu na nagtagumpay rin ang DENR sa pagpapatupad ng Clean Water Act sa pangangasiwa ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) noong 2018.

Umbot sa 486 commercial establishments ang nai-

pasara ng NWRB dahil sa pagkakaroon ng illegal deep wells habang ang Pepsi Cola Products Inc. ay pinagmulla ng halagang P11.8 million dahil sa walang kaukulang permisong anim na deep wells sa Muntinlupa City.

Pinuri rin ni Cimatu ang pinagsanib na pwersa ng DENR, National Bureau of Investigations (NBI) at ng Cebu City government dahil sa pagkakaaresto sa mga nagbebenta ng mahigit 100 kilo ng raw meat ng endangered green sea turtle.

"In our hands and on our shoulders, lie the future of our nation. In the crucial 11th hour facing climate change and all its chilling effects, we are at a very critical time to make dramatic changes," sabi pa ni Cimatu.



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LAND DEVELOPMENT IN COASTAL VILLAGES

DENR ALLAYS FEAR OF FLOODING ONCE AIRPORT RISES IN BULACAN

By Carmela Reyes-Estropo
@careyestropoINQ

BULAKAN, BULACAN—Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have assured residents that there would be no incidents of flooding when 2,372 hectares of idle fishponds are developed for the construction of a P700-billion international airport here.

Elisa Dimaliwat, chief of the DENR regional Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) for environmental monitoring and enforcement, said residents living in the coastal villages of Taliptip and Bambang "have nothing to worry" about the land de-

velopment project in the area.

"We will address all your concerns and we will be cautious in issuing environmental clearance certificate [to the project proponents]," Dimaliwat told some 200 villagers during a public hearing here on Monday.

Idle fishponds

Silvertides Holding Corp., which initiated the public hearing, would not confirm if the consultation with the villagers was for the airport construction.

But Inquirer sources said Silvertides was contracted by the proponent, San Miguel Corp. (SMC), to acquire the fishponds from private owners to give way to the airport project

dubbed "Aerotropolis."

Silvertides already acquired about 2,000 ha of fishponds in this town, residents and local officials here said. The affected areas are titled private lands that had been used for inland fishing but are now idle.

SMC officials have said that construction activities for the project, being positioned as an alternative to Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City, will start this year. The project will cover coastal areas in this town.

Dimaliwat said her office would ensure that Silvertides would comply with all requirements and heed their recommendations to prevent massive

flooding in the villages affected by the project construction.

"Approving and issuing the ECC (environmental compliance certificate) to Silvertides might be delayed because the company had yet to specify its project in this area," Dimaliwat told the Inquirer.

Drainage canals

According to Philkairos Inc., a group that conducted an environmental impact assessment of the area, the site is situated in a low ground and is flood-prone.

The group has recommended building drainage canals during land development to mitigate flooding.

Gil Calimon, 60, a resident

of Barangay Bagumbayan here, said backfilling operations during land development would elevate the ground that could lead to rising water levels around affected villages.

"This will further worsen the floods we experience during high tide," he said.

Heavy earthwork on idle fishponds includes backfilling and may require 205 million cubic meters of filling materials. Philkairos said in a report.

Fe Anastacio, 67, a resident of Barangay Taliptip, said she feared the project would also displace fishpond caretakers and that they would not be given a resettlement site or livelihood programs. INQ



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GONE TOO SOON?



Text by MAE LORRAINE R. LORENZO
Illustration by MAUREEN GONZALES

Raising the alarm on the rising rate of animal extinction

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People are fixated on animals especially upon the arrival of the Year of the Pig. They look at the signs and connect their birth year to an animal, and then they learn whether they were born in the year of a tiger, a rooster, a sheep or a rabbit.

Whether there is fortune or misfortune in the coming year, a lot of the 12 animal signs in the Chinese Lunar calendar are fortunate to be "alive" – the dog, horse, snake, and of course, the pig. Except for the dragon, almost all these animals are flourishing in numbers. On the side of misfortune, unlucky stars have fallen on some animals not belonging in the Chinese zodiac.

One of the unfortunate ones is the Spix Macaw, the blue bird made famous by the movie, *Rio*, is now officially extinct. The blue spix is said to be part of the eight species of birds that have been deemed extinct or suspected extinct based on the study by Bird Life International, a global partnership of organizations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity.

Much like the story of *Blu* in the movie, man's activity – deforestation specifically – is pointed as the main culprit for birds' extinction.

Last year also saw the disappearance of the mighty White Rhino, as well as the vaquita, a close cousin of dolphins which used to be found in the Gulf of California.

Before, animals would become extinct naturally due to loss of genetic variation. Today, however, animals have begun disappearing at a very rapid pace because of man's progress. Forests, the animals' natural habitat, are destroyed in favor of man's activity and demand while oceans get polluted because of industrial fishing and oil spills, and choked with plastic waste.

Local disappearance

In our own backyard, the decline of fauna and marine life is alarming. Government agencies are closely monitoring the population of the popular *tawilis*, a fresh-water sardine found only in Batangas.

According to a International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) report, the harvest of *tawilis* has gone down by as much as 49 percent in the past 10 years.

"Fishing effort using illegal gears which target this species in the lake is increasing, but at this time the rate of increase has not been quantified specifically, so it is inferred that the population has declined by at least 50 percent," the report said.

This officially marks the *tawilis* as an "endangered species."

There are also quite a number of critically endangered birds that can only be found in the Philippines based on reports from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These include the 'Bleeding Heart' birds (pigeons and doves) found in Mindoro, Negros, and Sulu. Doves like the Cebu Brown Dove and Negros Fruit Dove are also part of the endangered list.

The Philippine Cockatoo, the Sulu Hornbill and the Rufous-headed Hornbill are also part of the endangered list.

Sadly, the majestic Philippine Eagle is still part of the endangered list as illegal poaching continues to threaten the bird population to this day.

Other local animals like the Mindoro tamaraw and Bohol's tarsier (the world's smallest primate) are listed under 'near threatened' while the *butanding* (whale shark), famous in some of the country's tourist towns, was considered endangered in 2016 but its population has since recovered.

Focus on wetlands ^{2/3}

According to the conservation group, Haribon Foundation, recent bird monitoring activity also revealed a lower population of waterbirds in Palau Island and in Buguey wetlands in Cagayan province compared to the previous year.

One plausible reason for the decrease in population is the habitat change of birds in Buguey wetlands due to the recent monocropping of mangroves in the area.

The bird monitoring activity was conducted as part of the annual Asian Waterbird Census held by the DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR-CENRO) Aparri, assisted by Haribon which was led by Haribon wildlife biologist David Quimpo.

The group visited Buguey wetlands and Palau Island in Cagayan province to count waterbirds as part of a global monitoring program on waterbird population.

Every year, thousands of migratory birds visit the Philippines. As the habitat up north freezes during the winter season, birds travel to warmer places such as the tropics to find food. The Philippines is part of the East Asian/Australasian Flyway where various migratory bird species from China, Japan, Siberia and other countries take course during the months of September to April.

As these birds fly thousands of kilometers to cross countries, they look for good places to rest and eat, including the wetlands.

Haribon Foundation urges the public to keep these wetlands in good condition as the survival of migratory birds depends on it.

To raise awareness in the locality, DENR-CENRO Aparri and Haribon also conducted a learning session in three schools in Buguey wherein grade school students learned about migratory birds and the importance of conserving their habitats.

An extinction of different species is considered dangerous as it can cause the imbalance of the country's natural habitats.

Informing Filipinos about the impending disappearance if we continue with mindless progress is one way to address this pressing concern.

As information is important, may the Chinese New Year and the awareness of animal signs become an impetus to raise the alarm on the reality that soon, other animals may be gone forever.



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“Before, animals would become extinct naturally due to loss of genetic variation. Today, animals have begun disappearing at a rapid pace because of man’s progress. Forests, the animals’ natural habitat, are destroyed in favor of man’s activity and demand.”

YEAR OF THE PIG

Wild Pigs of the Philippines



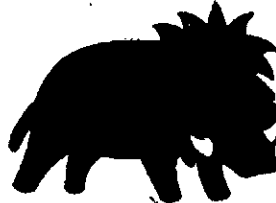
Palawan Bearded Pig
Sus ahoenobarbus

Endemic Near Threatened



Mindoro Warty Pig
Sus oiveri

Endemic Vulnerable



Visayan Warty Pig
Sus cebifrons

Endemic Critically Endangered



Philippine Warty Pig
Sus philippensis

Endemic Vulnerable



www.biodiversity.gov.ph (c) 2018
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GREEN IS IN!

Candaba wetlands: Helping fight climate change

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Part of the solution to survive the impact of climate change may be Central Luzon's Candaba wetlands.

According to Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez, healthy wetlands in general provide natural solutions in coping with climate change. Peatlands, mangroves, swamps and seagrass beds are the world's most effective carbon sinks.

Joy Navarro of the DENR-BMB's Caves, Wetlands and other Ecosystems Division said peatlands cover three percent of our planet's land yet store approximately 30

percent of all land-based carbon, which is twice the amount of all the world's forests combined.

Rodriguez said inland wetlands, like rivers and lakes, absorb and store water from excessive rains and reduces floods, while coastal wetlands act as protective buffer against storm surges and tsunamis, providing shield to coastal communities.

This year's World Wetlands Day, celebrated last Feb. 2 under the theme "Wetlands and Climate Change" highlights the importance of healthy and intact wetlands to one of the most pressing challenges of our times - climate change.

The BMB chief cited that wetlands are

often seen as "wastelands" but when well-maintained, healthy wetlands absorb and store excess rainfall and store it for the dry season, which helps communities cope with extreme weather events. They then function as "kidneys" of the earth, she added.

DENR-Central Luzon Conservation and Development Division chief Minerva Martinez said the 32,000-hectare Candaba swamp in Central Luzon serves as one of the 117 important bird areas in the Philippines. It has consistently been listed in the Asian Bird Map as an important wintering area for migratory birds, regularly supporting between 5,000 and 10,000 birds from October up to April.



Candaba wetlands
(Photo by Fordz Decena)



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A zero-waste Philippines is possible

Five years ago, Presidential Proclamation No. 760, signed by former president Benigno S. Aquino III, officially declared the month of January as Zero Waste Month. The proclamation defined "zero waste" as "an advocacy that promotes designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, and to conserve and recover all resources, and not indiscriminately dispose or burn them."

Even before the issuance of the proclamation, various nongovernmental organizations in the Philippines have been trying to mainstream zero waste as a goal for our government. In fact, PP 760 traces its roots to the first-ever Zero Waste Youth Convergence organized by Mother Earth Foundation, in which 5,000 youth leaders issued a Zero Waste Youth statement calling for the celebration of a Zero Waste Month.

January was chosen as Zero Waste Month because this was the month when Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, got signed. Many countries around the world have expressed admiration for this landmark Philippine law, as it calls for a decentralized waste and resource management system that also bans waste incinerators.

According to the National Solid Waste Commission, waste in Philippine cities and municipalities is mostly composed of organics (52 percent). Recyclables comprise

COMMENTARY

FROILAN GRATE AND JED ALEGADO

28 percent, and residuals (waste that can't be reused, recycled or composted) 18 percent. Much of the waste (80 percent, which is organics and recyclables combined) can be safely returned to nature or industry without resorting to landfills and incineration.

Through proper segregation, organics can be composted in our homes, schools and offices. In a linear waste management approach, organics are wasted instead of being turned into a resource. Under a zero-waste approach, recyclables are reused and recycled and become a source of livelihood for waste workers as well.

Various cities and towns in the Philippines have shown leadership in implementing the law, hoping to transform into a zero-waste city. A good model is San Fernando, Pampanga, which achieved a 78-percent waste diversion record (or the amount that was composted or recycled instead of going into the landfill) in 2017, from 12 percent in 2012. Tacloban City was also able to increase the coverage of waste collection but managed to decrease the volume of waste sent into landfills.

However, the work does not end at the local government unit (LGU) level. Many

LGUs that have already been implementing zero-waste policies need strong support from national government agencies and legislators. They have the power to enable an environment that supports these policies by enacting laws and supporting the implementation of such laws that can scale up the successes of LGUs doing the zero-waste approach.

For instance, cities like San Fernando, Pampanga, that are trying to reduce non-recyclable plastic waste through local ordinances cannot implement zero waste effectively unless there is a law at the national level to mandate businesses to stop the production of single-use disposable plastic packaging. Having a national law will ensure that materials such as disposable implements or throwaway sachet packaging are not produced in the first place. Thus, it removes the burden from LGUs to have to manage plastic waste that can neither be recycled nor composted.

With strong political will and robust policies in place, government leaders and an engaged citizenry can transform the Philippines into a zero-waste country. The coming midterm elections is an opportune time to ensure that we are on the right track.

Froilan Grate is the regional coordinator of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives Asia-Pacific. Jed Alegado is the communications officer for Asia-Pacific of #breakfreefromplastic.



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How it's done Caloocan trash collector shows the best way to prevent garbage from spilling out which is through stacking them in a neat pile.

ROMAN PROSPERO



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NORTHERN PLAYGROUND San Juan town in La Union province is among the popular beach destinations in northern Luzon. Environmental advocates, however, fear that the province's waters will suffer from pollution once a coal-fired power plant operates in several villages in Luna town. —WILLIE LOMIBAO



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• Harnessing rainwater

TUGUEGARAO, Cagayan - At least 12 elementary schools and three secondary schools will benefit from the installation of rainwater collector systems in the province of Quirino. The Department of Public Works and Highways-Quirino District Engineering Office (DPWH-QDEO) said 34 collector systems, amounting to P3.4 million, were installed in the different schools. District Engineer Marifel T. Andes said the system offers an innovative way to maximize use of rainwater for sanitation purposes. Rainwater is collected through pipes connected from the roofing of the school buildings. Accumulated rainwater is distributed to toilets, washrooms and other facilities that need water. (Lizle Basa In)go)



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The politics in the air we breathe

Somewhere in the Sierra Madre—it's cold and raining outside, but here, inside my tent, I am dry and warm. Long hours of sleep await me, or a leisurely read of any of the e-books I've made sure to bring along. Together with my friends and our Bugkalot guides, I've set up camp on a mountaintop near the tripartite border of Aurora, Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya. It's been a long day—of crossing rivers, trekking through the mossy forest, dodging rattan thorns—but we can take comfort in the fact that tonight we are safe and sound.

I have done this countless times, but I still learn something new with every hike. Else, I am reminded of something old yet still relevant. On this mountain, known to the locals as Mt. Pamazam-pazam, my realization is how different the air is, how fragrant, how refreshing to inhale—to a point that breathing becomes a pleasure. After a recent round of cough and colds, it's as if—despite the arduous climb and the chilly weather—my lungs have been renewed, my body rejuvenated.

Corollary to this, I realize that air quality is something we who dwell in cities often take for granted: We want clean bodies, clean clothes, clean water, clean food, and yet care very little for clean air. Only when we are denied an astronomic spectacle do we notice the pollution that envelops the city—but even then we see it in aesthetic, not medical or existential, terms. Only when we find ourselves walking in Taft Avenue or caught in Edsa traffic aboard a nonaircon bus does the unclean air become a felt reality.

Despite our desensitization to unclean air, it has dire consequences for our health and quality of life. Studies show that, like secondhand smoke, ambient air pollution



SECOND OPINION

GIDEON LASCO

can worsen asthma symptoms, increase the risk of respiratory infection, reduce lung function and exacerbate cardiovascular diseases. Alarmingly, air pollution accounts for 45.3 deaths per 100,000 Filipinos—the third highest such rate in the world.

"Is it really that bad?" some might ask, and my response will be: "Maybe not for you." The fact that air pollution is experienced far more acutely and profoundly by the urban poor also makes it a matter of (in)equity and social justice.

Here in the Sierra Madre, people are not spared from illness—access to health remains a challenge—but the adults we encounter look remarkably young, including our guides who look 10 years younger than their actual ages. Doubtless, living so close to the forests has been good for their health, an assumption backed by a wealth of scholarship affirming the manifold benefits of being surrounded by trees.

Sadly, we have a grave shortage of greenery in our cities; the parks that ought

to have served as their "lungs" are either gone or neglected, and our air-conditioned malls have served as proxies for public spaces. As the jeremiads of the architect Paulo Alcazaren point out, it wasn't meant to be this way, but decades of self-interest and failed governance have gotten in the way of strategic urban planning.

I hope more people realize the value of our forests and trees, and see them not as obstacles to development, but the very image of the development we must strive for. I hope that beyond superficial acts like cleaning a portion of Manila Bay, our leaders act on deeper problems, like reviving our public parks, fixing our public transport system (vehicles account for 88 percent of Metro Manila's air pollution), and finding ways for environmental protection and local economies to coexist. I also hope they find the political will to implement laws that already exist but are poorly implemented.

Ultimately, having cleaner air also entails making choices like pursuing renewable energy, protecting our biodiversity and reducing our carbon footprints. Over 4,300 meters above sea level and 200 kilometers away from Manila, this mountain may seem distant, but should we also not recognize the inexorable links between forest and city, the indivisibility of our life-worlds with nature, the politics in the air we breathe?

When I go back to Manila, surely I will yearn to inhale the fresh air of the mountains anew. But perhaps it is not too late to work for a future when we need not go this far.

Follow @gideonlasco on Twitter. Send feedback to glasco@inquirer.com.ph.



Top 10 threats to global health in 2019

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently came out with a list of the top 10 threats to global health that will demand attention from WHO and its health partners in 2019.

These threats, that are also affecting us in the country, include the following:

Vaccine hesitancy, or the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines, threatens to reverse progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccination is one of the most cost-effective ways of avoiding disease — it currently prevents two to three million deaths a year, and a further 1.5 million could be avoided if global coverage of vaccinations improved.

MEDICINE CABINET
TEODORO B. PADILLA

Vaccine hesitancy is an urgent issue in the Philippines following a drop in vaccine confidence and coverage.

Dengue remains a global health threat. Dengue cases in the country also increased by 21% in January to October 2018 compared to the same period in 2017. The WHO explains that dengue is a mosquito-borne disease that causes flu-like symptoms. Dengue may be lethal, killing up to 20% of those who contract its severe form.

Meanwhile, the world will face another global influenza pandemic — the only thing we don't know is when it will hit and how severe it will be. WHO warns that global defenses against this threat are only as effective as the weakest link in any country's health emergency preparedness and response system.

Every year, WHO recommends which strains should be included in the flu vaccine to protect people from seasonal flu. If a strain develops into one which could cause pandemic, the WHO will activate mechanisms that it has put in place in partnership with major players.

The **HIV epidemic** continues to rage with nearly a million people every year dying of HIV/AIDS. The 6,532 new HIV infections reported by the DoH from January to July 2018 is the highest recorded so far. The average number of Filipinos newly diagnosed with HIV per day has steadily increased: 2 in 2009, 7 in 2011, 13 in 2013, 22 in 2015, and 31 in 2018.

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease, are collectively responsible for over 70% of all deaths worldwide. These three NCDs are among the leading causes of death in the Philippines. The rise of NCDs has been driven by five major risk factors: tobacco use, physical inactivity, the harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets and air pollution.

Air pollution and climate change: Nine out of ten people breathe polluted air every day. In 2019, air pollution is considered by WHO as the greatest environmental risk to health. Microscopic pollutants in the air can penetrate respiratory and circulatory systems, damaging the lungs, heart and brain, killing 7 million people prematurely every year from diseases such as cancer, stroke, heart and lung disease. The primary cause of air pollution (burning fossil fuels) is also a major contributor to climate change, which impacts people's health in different ways. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause 250,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress. As an archipelago, the Philippines is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Fragile and vulnerable settings: More than 1.6 billion people (22% of the global population) live in places where protracted crises (through a combination of challenges such as drought, famine, conflict, and population displacement) and weak health services leave them without access to basic care. Fragile settings exist in almost all regions of the world, and these are where half of the key targets in the sustainable development goals, including on child and maternal health, remain unmet.

Antimicrobial resistance is the ability of bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi to resist these medicines. Drug resistance is driven by the overuse of antimicrobials in people, but also in animals, especially those used for food production, as well as in the environment.

Ebola and other high-threat pathogens: In 2018, the Democratic Republic of the Congo saw two separate Ebola outbreaks, both of which spread to cities of more than 1 million people. WHO has come up with a watchlist for priority research and development. This includes Ebola, several other hemorrhagic fevers, Zika, Nipah, Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and disease X, which represents the need to prepare for an unknown pathogen that could cause a serious epidemic.

Weak primary health care: Primary health care can meet the majority of a person's health needs of the course of their life. Health systems with strong primary health care are needed to achieve universal health coverage. Yet many countries do not have adequate primary health care facilities. This neglect may be a lack of resources in low- or middle-income countries, but possibly also a focus in the past few decades on single disease programs, the WHO concludes.

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