

DATE : 29 FEB 2019

DAY : Saturday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
PUBLIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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The Manila Times

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EDITORIAL

CARTOON

23 FEB 2013

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Fecal coliform levels down in Manila Bay

LEVELS of fecal coliform bacteria had been going down steadily in some parts of Manila Bay, after a series of cleanup activities and the crackdown on several establishments found to be violating environmental laws, an official of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Friday.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda told *The Manila Times* that water in Manila Bay was now cleaner, with fecal coliform levels dropping in some areas, particularly in the vicinity of the US Embassy.

He attributed the improvement to the cleanup activities and the closure of big business establishments tagged as major pollutants of the bay.

However, swimming is still not allowed since coliform levels are still significantly higher than the safe level of 100 most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100 ml).

Latest data from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) showed that bacteria levels taken from

the US Embassy area have gone down to 1,700 mpn/100 ml.

This is the lowest count in all the eight water quality monitoring stations of the DENR. The waters in front of Diamond Hotel on Quintos Street and Admiral Hotel on Aldecoa Street registered a count of 3,500 mpn/100 ml and 9,200 mpn/100 ml, respectively, while the waters of the Padre Faura drainage outfall also tested lower for fecal coliform, clocking in at 1.6 million mpn/100 ml from 7.9 million mpn/100 ml.

Coliform levels have also gone down in the beachfront area near Remedios Street from 35 million mpn/100 ml to 11 million mpn/100 ml.

Antiporda renewed the DENR's appeal to the public to refrain from swimming in Manila Bay as the waters remain unsafe and polluted.

He said the DENR would also coordinate with the Department of Health for consultations on the impact of desilting operations.

EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ



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NIGHT OWL

Manila Bay can be saved

By ANNA MAE YU LAMENTILLO

IN the United States, the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) mandates all states to adopt water quality standards that would define how much of pollutants can be in the water such that it might meet the minimum threshold for water, fishing and swimming, and other beneficial uses.

In Minnesota, once the water quality is assessed to be below the prescribed rate — they are automatically included in the Impaired Waters List being managed by the Minnesota

Pollution Control Agency. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), which is defined as the “the maximum amount of a pollutant a body of water can receive without violating water quality standards, and an allocation of that amount to the pollutant’s sources” is then developed. The TMDL process commences via identification of all sources of pollutants and a scientific determination of how much each source must reduce its contribution in order to meet the standard.

It took almost two decades for Minnesota to clean up First Fulda, a lake in Murray County, which at one point



Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar, data-gathering activities relevant to bathymetric or depth measurement survey and water quality test for both Manila Bay and Navotas River have already been completed. The result will then be the basis of dredging activities, which will be the major mechanism for the removal of the accumulated pollutants. The bathymetric survey is necessary to estimate the amount of material to be removed and specify the areas that must be given focus during the clean-up.

Starting February, an equipment fleet composed of amphibious excavators, dumping scows, dump trucks, debris segregator, street sweepers, and vacuum sewer cleaner will be strategically deployed. DPWH will also procure additional spider excavators and trash skimmer to assist in the rehabilitation efforts.

As of date, three dredging sites have already been identified -- Navotas River and Estero de Vitas in Tondo, Manila; and the priority 100 meters from the shoreline of Manila Bay spanning approximately 1.5-kilometer from Manila Yacht Club breakwater to the US Embassy.

The cleaning of Manila Bay will not happen overnight. As the old saying goes — It takes more than one cold day for the river to freeze three feet deep. Rome was not built in a day.

The six-month closure of Boracay has proved that it can be done. From a coliform bacteria level as high as one million Most Probable Number (MPN) per 100 ml, water quality is now down to 19 to 20 MPN/100 ML, according to DENR. This just goes to prove that if you work hard enough at it, you can grind even an iron pestle down to a needle.

could no longer be used for swimming and recreation.

Cleaning the Manila Bay, like the Poplar River, is an uphill battle but it can be done with the concerted action of government and the public sector. It is about time — considering that as early as 2008, the Supreme Court already issued a mandamus ordering the national government to clean up Manila Bay, put up adequate and appropriate sanitary landfill and solid waste and liquid disposal as well as other alternative garbage disposal systems.

As of February 14, according to



P-1 q2

AT GROUND LEVEL

SATUR C. OCAMPO

Rehabilitate Manila Bay sans reclamation projects



There is probably no question that the Duterte government's 2017-2022 plan to clean up and rehabilitate the gravely polluted Manila Bay, at the cost of P43 billion, is a most welcome, although much-delayed, development.

Much-delayed because it was in 2008 that the Supreme Court granted the petition for a writ of continuing mandamus filed – in 1999! – by environmentalist lawyer Antonio Oposa. The SC is compelling government to act fast on the ecological crisis. On Jan. 20, it directed the convening of its advisory committee to monitor and verify the implementation of its decision, emphasizing the "extreme necessity for all concerned executive departments and agencies to immediately act and discharge their respective official duties and obligations... [and] set timetables for performance and completion of the tasks..."

And President Duterte has formed a task force to fast-track the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

Well and good. However, the Manila Bay rehabilitation plan lacks "comprehensive and systematic measures based on sound science and social justice," according to a broad group of environmentalists, scientists, lawyers, church people, a national fishers association, an urban-poor organization, and various other sectors.

The group calls particular attention to three points: One, the plan emphasizes the relocation of 230,000 informal settler families. Two, it neglects to hold government agencies responsible for the long-standing insufficiency of public sanitation services. And three, the group warns that "at least 28,000 hectares of approved reclamation projects across the bay threaten to undo the various efforts to restore Manila Bay's ecosystem and natural resources."

Yesterday, these concerned citizens launched Manila Bay Watch, an advocacy campaign that aims to monitor the rehabilitation program to ensure that it's based on science and justice, that it shall serve the needs of the majority of the people, including the poor who depend on the bay waters for their livelihood, and to ensure that no new reclamation project shall be allowed along Manila Bay. They invited me to share my thoughts, acknowledging my continuing advocacy for environmental protection and conservation since my nine-year stint as a partylist (Bayan Muna) legislator.

The rehab plan sets 51 target outputs on solid waste and liquid waste management, informal settler families and illegal structures, habitat and resources management, and partnership and governance mechanisms. However, closer scrutiny by the group revealed that, in 2019, the provisions on habitat and resource management have been removed, expected outputs on solid and liquid wastes management have been trimmed and focused only on the coastal areas and waterways close to the bayside.

Most appalling is the revelation that P36 billion, out of the P43-billion total outlay, have been set aside for relocating the 230,000 informal settler families. So that was what it's really all about?

Unfair and lopsided, the group of protesters said. Why? Because, per a World Bank study, the low-income families contribute only 5% to Metro Manila's solid waste output, whereas the waste output of the total middle-income population and the commercial establishments are 9.6 times and 7.4 times more than that of the low-income. Why are we blaming the poor?

The Manila Bay Watch unity statement avers that the informal sector families shouldn't be relocated. Instead, onsite or in-city public housing should be developed for them with provision of proper waste management and sanitation services. Alongside that step, it urges that fishery be revitalized in Manila Bay and preferential access be given to the small fisher folk.

Scientific studies have shown that the major problem of pollution is due to lack of proper regulations on waste disposal not only of households but of manufacturing plants and business establishments, inadequacy or absence of public infrastructure and services such as materials recovery facilities, sanitary landfills, and sewerage pipelines. For instance, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's two water concessionaires – Manila Water and Maynilad – have connected only 14% of their serviced population to their sewerage pipes and systems and offered sanitation services to only 44% from 2011 to 2016.

The pollution crisis has deep roots. It can be traced back to the reconstruction of Manila's infrastructure demolished largely by US aerial bombings, under Gen. Douglas MacArthur's command, towards the end of World War II, 74 years ago. The Americans concede that Manila, next to Warsaw, was the most destroyed city in that war. Just imagine Manila as Marawi after the 2017 siege.



P-2 of 2

At Ground level

Revealing of where the blame lies – wrong policies, mismanagement, political corruption, private greed – is an account of Manila’s post-war rehabilitation by Gerardo P. Sicat, retired UP economics professor and former economic planning minister during the Marcos regime. In his column, *Crossroads*, in the **Philippine STAR** on Feb. 20, he wrote that the reconstruction boom of the immediate postwar period led to the development of industries replacing old services with new ones. The negligence that would spell large-scale pollution decades later started from there.

“The public works and city management neglected the regulation of effluents,” Sicat pointed out. “Soon, the draining of these effluents would poison the natural waterways with toxic waste, darkening and suffocating life in them.” Public works standards and bureaucracies suffered badly and the regulation and upkeep of facilities deteriorated, he added.

In fact, Sicat noted, public works construction not only neglected the drainage system, “but also filled up some existing waterways thought to be a hindrance toward land improvement.” Besides the failure of standards and breakup of institutional rules and processes, he lamented, “the new politics of accommodation that emerged after independence” further eroded the rules and processes.

Thus, building and improving roads became more attractive than digging waterways or allowing good drainage or rebuilding the city’s sewerage system. “In fact,” Sicat stressed, “politics would lead to the deterioration of the upkeep of the water services and sewerage systems.”

Alas, the politics of accommodation today has worsened, playing out in the approval of major reclamation projects on Manila Bay, according to reports, without the necessary risk assessments and corollary guidelines and rules. All together, at least 25 reclamation projects covering 28,647 hectares of foreshore areas are in varying stages of application, approval, and development. All these must be thoroughly examined and, on just basis, vigorously opposed.

Email: satur.ocampo@gmail.com





Manila Baywatch launched

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Around 200 leaders and members of fisherfolk, urban poor, women and environmental groups yesterday launched Manila Baywatch, a watchdog alliance that aims to monitor developments in the government's rehabilitation and reclamation programs for Manila Bay.

"Genuine rehabilitation for Manila Bay should be building livable housing for waterway and coastal communities, not threatening them with *de facto* eviction. Manila Bay's waters should be restored fit for fisherfolk, not for destructive land reclamation," said Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment and spokesperson for Manila Baywatch.

He said the alliance seeks to "use people power and science to ensure that Manila Bay's rehabilitation program is held accountable to the highest environmental and human-rights standards."

targeted 236,000 informal settler families, or P156,521 per ISF.

Various government estimates on relocation costs per family range from P200,000 to P300,000, he said. This means only 120,000 to 180,000 families will be able to avail of resettlement.

Dulce said only P7 billion is allocated for the cleanup, "with zero allocation for conserving fisheries and restoring ecosystems."

He claimed that many suspect that "Duterte's deprioritization of restoring coastal and marine landscapes is due to destructive reclamation projects expected to conflict with these areas that should have long been declared protected."

The group also alleged that at least 25 reclamation projects covering 28,647 hectares of foreshore areas in Manila Bay are in varying stages of application, approval and development.

The launch, held at the Malate Church, came on the heels of President Duterte's issuance of Administrative Order 16, which formed an inter-agency task force to implement the Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

Dulce said AO 16 is focused on relocating communities and has "little to no plan" to protect watershed and coastal ecosystems.

"Around 50,000 to 110,000 families may be left homeless given how the allocated funds for relocating informal settlers is grossly insufficient," he said.

Dulce noted that P36 billion was allotted for the relocation of the

"Manila Bay's rehabilitation is long overdue but we will not let it be a pretext for widespread evictions and reclamations. We will crowd-source citizen science from communities in Bataan down to Cavite to push for genuine rehab solutions, and strengthen the basis of our opposition to reclamation projects," Dulce said.

Apart from the Kalikasan, the alliance was initiated by national organizations Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines, Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya, Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap, Gabriela and Climate Change Network for Community-based Initiatives; regional groups Nilad Metro Manila and Akap Ka Manila Bay; and local people's organizations Alyarisa ng Mandaragat sa Bacoor, Baseco People's Alliance, Save Freedom Island Movement, Save Laguna Lake Movement and Alliance for Stewardship and Authentic Progress.



DOST offers new water treatment tech

Aside from providing images from microsatellites Diwata 1 and 2 to monitor the progress of the Manila Bay cleanup, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is ready to provide other locally developed technologies to help rehabilitate the bay, an official said Thursday.

Secretary Fortunato dela Peña said that in a recent meeting between the DOST and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), headed by Secretary Roy Cimatu, the DOST made a formal offer of all the wastewater treatment technologies it has in its arsenal.

Dela Peña said the government can order business establishments around Manila Bay to install these technologies instead of resorting to permanent closure of businesses, which can lead to job losses.

"We can help these business establishments comply with environmental laws so there will be no permanent economic disruption," he said.

Dela Peña said the DOST is taking the Manila Bay cleanup as an opportunity for locally developed technologies to be adopted commercially.

"We have several technologies that have already been proven to be effective and we need only to adopt them, instead of looking at foreign technology that will be likely be more expensive," he said.

Dela Peña cited the Eco-Friendly Septic System, which features the use of Vigormin organo-mineral powder, developed with DOST funding by Adamson University professor and tech startup entrepreneur Merlinda Palencia.

He said the system helped the Travellers Pension House and Beach Resort in General Luna, Siargao treat its wastewater to comply with DENR effluent standards.

- Rainier Allan Ronda



Mga tutol sa reklamasyon papansin

"WALA na ngang naitulong, nag-lingay pa!"

Ito ang sambit ng ilang mga namamasyal sa Manila Bay kahapon kasabay sa isinagawang protesta ng Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment laban sa planong reklamasyon sa nasabing baybayin.

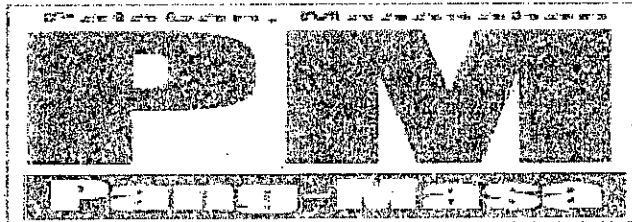
Naniniwala ang mga hindi nagpakilalang namamasyal sa Manila Bay na pansariling interes lamang ang hangad ng grupo na naglunsad ng "Manila Baywatch" kasabay ng isinagawa nilang protesta kahapon sa harapan ng Malate Church dahil hindi na nila inisip ang magandang resulta nito sa oras na matuloy ang reklamasyon.

Ayon sa grupo na binubuo ng mga mangingisda, maralita, kababaihan at ilang miyembro ng maka-kalikasan, sang-ayon sila sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ngunit tinutuligsa nila ang reklamasyon dahil maaapektuhan ang mga yamang-dagat.

Matatandaan na kamakailan lang ay nagpahayag ang tagapagsalita ng Pangulo na si Salvador Panelo na sakaling matuloy ang planong reklamasyon sa Manila Bay ay magbubunga ito ng libo-libong trabaho sa mga Pilipino gayundin ay uunlad ang lungsod na makasasakop dito.

"When you clean up Manila Bay, certainly all of us will benefit. That will generate income to government because of the sharing, and that will generate jobs because they will be establishing structures there," ani Panelo.

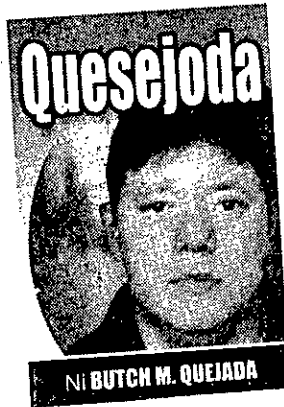
REMATE NEWS TEAM



23 FEB 2019

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Betrayal of public trust?



Oplan 'linis ilog, kanal, imburnal,' umpisahan na

Habang tag-init at tag-tuyot at hindi pa tag-ulan, dapat mataliin ng mga bright sa gobierno ang paglilinis ng ilang mga piling ilog na nag-uumpaw sa basura, kaya tuloy mabaho at napakarumi nito.

Kawawa kasi ang madlang people oras na nagbaha sa kanilang lugar at hindi natanggal ang mga madudumi, mabaho at nanggigitang mga basura sa kanila.

Ika nga, 'health problem,' kapag ganito ang situwasyon sa kanilang paligid dahil na rin ang iba sa kanila ay mga salaula.

Sabi nga, tapon doon, tapon dito ng mga basura!

Dapat ang tauhan ng gobierno na gagawa ng 'oplan linisan' ay bilisan ang kanilang mga gagawin para makuha agad ang mga tambak na mga basura sa mga baradong kanal at imburnal sa Metro-Manila.

Ang masama kasi kaya lumaki ang problema ay nagpabaya ang lokal na pamahalaan sa paglilinis ng kanilang mga basura na naging dahilan tuloy ng pagbabara ng mga ilog, kanal at iba pa.

Hindi biro ang problema ng gobierno sa paglilinis ng Tulahan river, Navotas river at ilan pang ilog sa Metro - Manila dahil kailangan itong ma-dredging at malinis para tuluy-tuloy ang takbo ng tubig.

Ano sa palagay ninyo?

Abangan.



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The Manila Times

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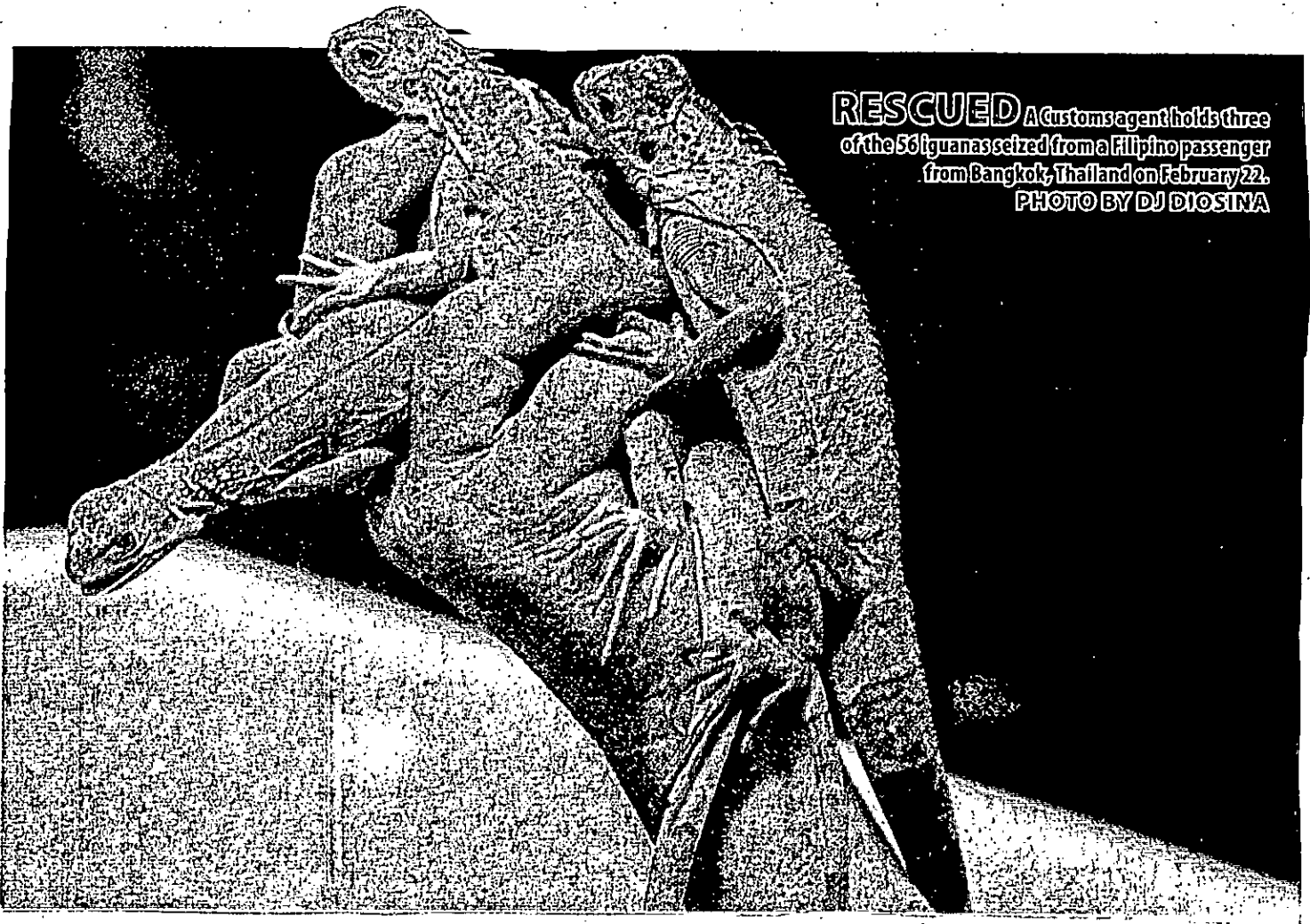
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RESCUED A Customs agent holds three of the 56 iguanas seized from a Filipino passenger from Bangkok, Thailand on February 22.
PHOTO BY DJ DIOSINA



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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SEIZED IGUANAS - Two of the 56 iguanas found inside the luggage of a Filipino who had arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport from Bangkok Friday. The endangered animals were confiscated by Customs personnel and turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for safekeeping. (All Vicoy)



Balita

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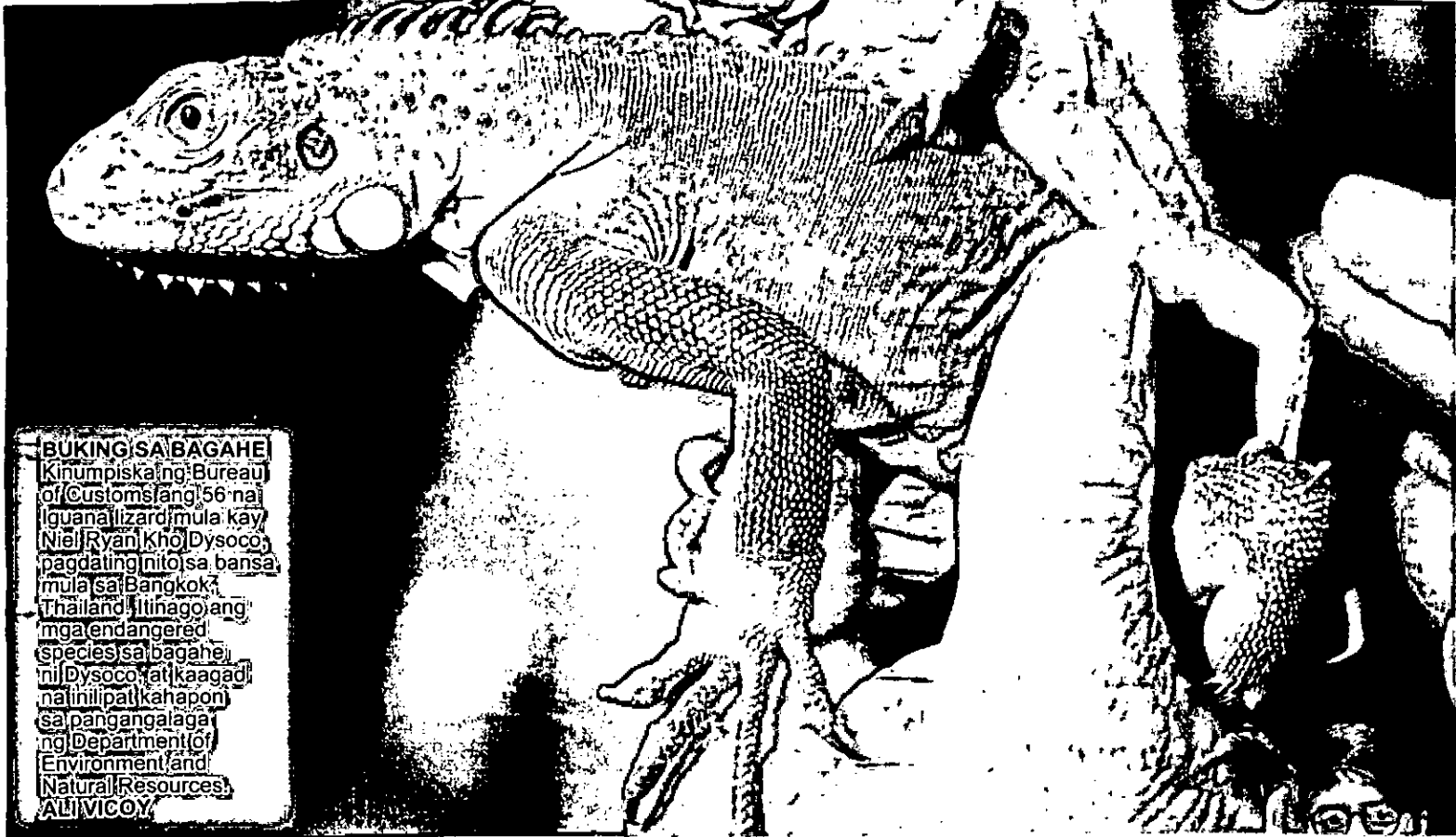
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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAMAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA



BUKING SA BAGAHE
Kinumpiska ng Bureau
of Customs ang 56-na
iguana lizard mula kay
Niel Ryan Kho Dysoco,
pagdating nito sa bansa
mula sa Bangkok,
Thailand. Ilinagang
mga endangered
species sa bagahe
ni Dysoco at kaagad
natin ilipat kahapon
sa pangangalaga
ng Department of
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BOC seizes P2m worth of ecstasy

By Vito Barcelo and Joel E. Zurbano

THE Bureau of Customs seized more than 1,000 ecstasy tablets worth more than P2 million and 56 iguanas at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The confiscated illegal drugs came from the Netherlands through a certain G. Voorthuzen. They were declared as light boxes.

In a separate incident, the BOC intercepted 56 iguanas from Filipino passenger Niel Ryan Kho Dysoco who arrived at the NAIA from Bangkok, Thailand.

The iguanas, which had no proper documentation, were discovered hidden inside Dysoco's luggage. Authorities said the iguanas were already placed under 'inhumane conditions' inside black socks while others were put in a bottled water container in an attempt to mislead the authorities.

The seized animals were turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Dysoco arrived early morning Friday on board Philippine Airlines PR737 at NAIA Terminal 2.

Dysoco, whose luggages yielded the iguanas, five of which were already dead,

will be charged for violating Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

The iguanas will be brought to animal rescue center based in Quezon city for rehabilitation.

In October 2018, Airport and Customs authorities also intercepted a smuggled shipment of at least 12 juvenile (pythons) snakes at the Central Mail Exchange Center in Pasay City.

The snakes were brought into the country concealed inside a package and "were misdeclared as Taro chips from Indonesia."

The authorities made the apprehension a day after Customs NAIA officials turned over a shipment of confiscated 250 heads geckos to the Bureau of Animal Industry at the Paircargo warehouse, also in Pasay City.

The market price of newly-hatched snakes ranges from P5,000 to P20,000, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

It added that a full-grown reticulated python snake, which is considered the world's longest and heaviest snake that usually constrict its prey, can weigh as much as 30-40 kilograms and grow as much as 17 to 18 feet on an average.



Manila Standard

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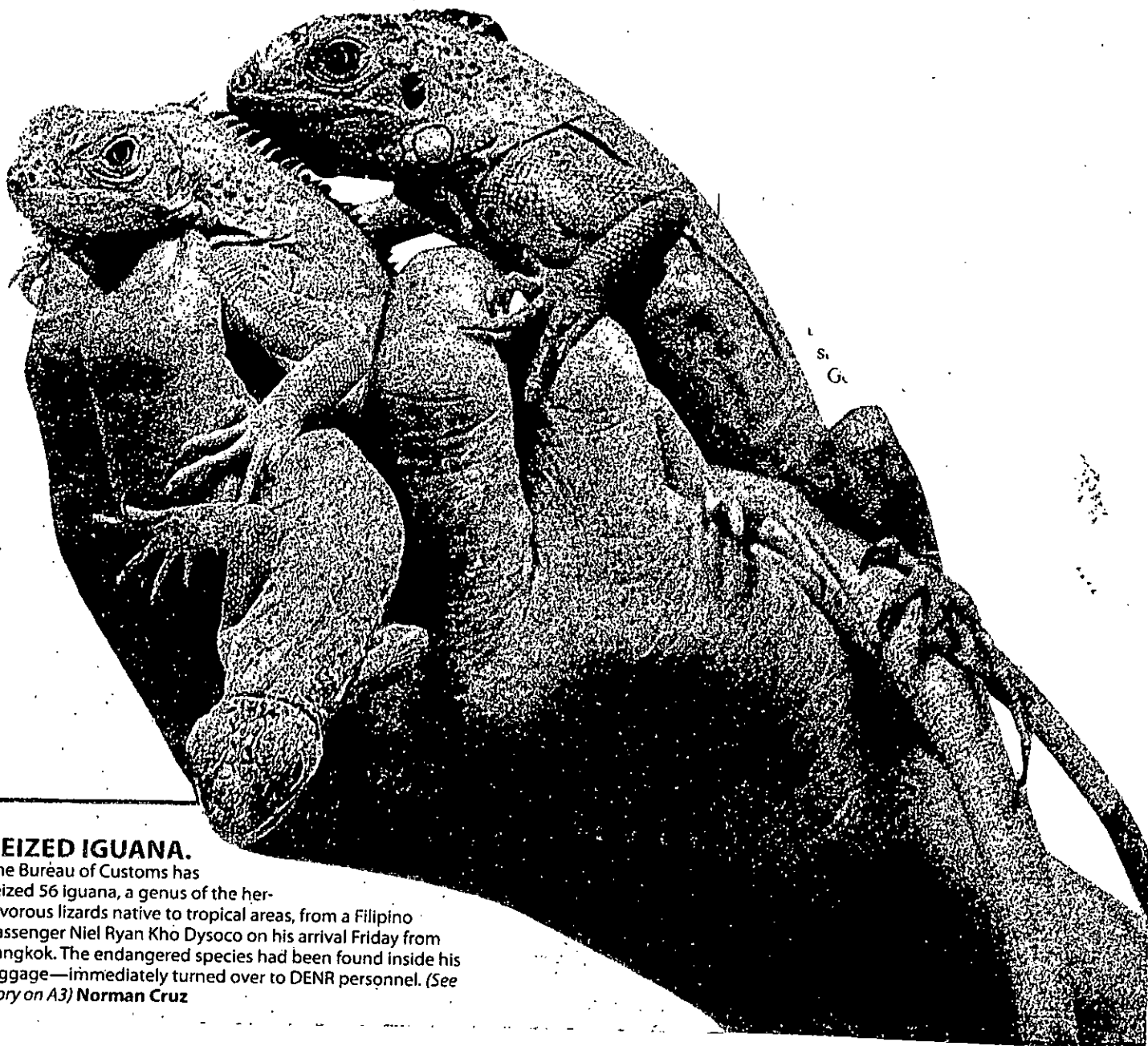
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SEIZED IGUANA.

The Bureau of Customs has seized 56 iguana, a genus of the herbivorous lizards native to tropical areas, from a Filipino passenger Niel Ryan Kho Dysoco on his arrival Friday from Bangkok. The endangered species had been found inside his luggage—immediately turned over to DENR personnel. (See story on A3) **Norman Cruz**



23 FEB 2019

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65 iguanas seized

Sixty-five live iguanas were confiscated by Bureau of Customs (BoC) personnel from a Filipino passenger who arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 2 from Bangkok, Thailand Thursday night.

The iguanas were intercepted from Niel Ryan Kho Dysoco, 40, upon disembarkation from flight PR737 at past 11 p.m. The passenger was detained by BoC for violation of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

The estimated market price of each of the iguanas is P50,000. They were not declared by Dysoco and were hidden inside his baggage.

The iguanas will be turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for proper care and protection from wildlife trafficking.

Meanwhile, a Canadian national convicted of manslaughter in Toronto 14 years ago was barred from entering the country as a security and public safety threat.

Imad Hermiz, 32, was intercepted at NAIA Terminal 1 for his failure to explain his purpose of visiting the Philippines, port operations chief Grifton Medina said.

"He claimed he will attend a religious activity in Davao City but could not provide details for said visit," Medina said.

Hermiz had admitted to killing a fellow Canadian during a party in 2005.

Anthony Ching



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

PILIPINO
PILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
MIRROR
- SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN -

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IPINAKIKITA ng mga tauhan ng Bureau of Customs ang 56 piraso na Iguana na nasamsam mula sa isang pasahero na galing sa Bangkok, Thailand. Ang endangered species ay natagpuan sa loob ng kanyang bagahe. Ang mga Iguana ay inilipat sa pangangalaga ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
Kuha ni **NORMAN ARAGA**



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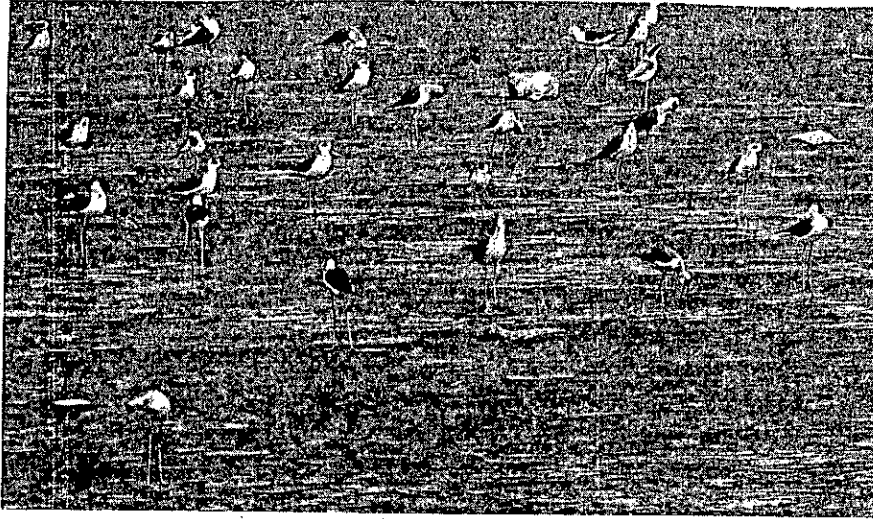
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RIVER VISITORS - Migratory birds flock to a river near Mambaling, Cebu City, in search of food. (Juan Carlo de Vela)



50 endangered reptile nasabat sa NAIA

Umaabot sa 50 reptile ang nakumpiska sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 2 mula sa mga bagaheng galing sa Bangkok, Thailand.

Sa pinagsanib na puwersa ng mga tauhan ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) at Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), nasagip ang may 50 piraso ng chameleon, bearded dragon at iguana na nakasilid sa loob ng dalawang bagahe na pag-aari ni Neil Ryan Dysoco.

Ayon kay Atty. Andres Villaruel ng DENR-NAIA, sakay ng Philip-

pine Airlines Flight PR 737 si Dysoco kasama ang dalawang malaking bagahe at nang idaan sa scanning monitor ay doon na nabuking ang bitbit na mga reptile.

Sinabi pa ni Villaruel na walang maipakitang mga dokumento si Dysoco sa pagdadala ng mga endangered species kaya kinumpiska na nila ang mga chameleon, bearded dragon at iguana.

Nabatid na nagkakahalaga ng P25,000 hanggang P45,000 ang bentahan sa black market ng mga nasabing mapanganib na uri ng hayop. **(Vick Aquino)**



Smuggling of Iguana thru NAIA foiled

By Willy M. Balasa

THE Bureau of Customs at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport terminal 2 confiscated some 56 pieces of live Iguana brought in by a Filipino traveler from Bangkok, Thailand early yesterday morning on a Philippine Airlines flight.

According to BoC-NAIA District Collector Mimi Talusan, the two pieces of luggage of Filipino passenger Neil Ryan Dysoco were marked X and he was instructed to proceed to the examiner's lane for verification of his baggage.

Upon examination in front of Dysoco, his luggage yielded some 56 Iguana, 5 of which were already dead.

The Iguana were placed inside black socks while the rest were placed inside a bottled water container to mislead customs X-ray operatives and examiners.

RA 9147 Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act states that any individual must secure a permit to bring out or import wildlife species.

No person or entity shall

be allowed possession of wildlife unless such person or entity can prove financial and technical capability and facility to maintain the animals, said DENR Agent Arnel Mataro assigned at the NAIA.

He also said that the Iguana will be brought to the rescue center in Quezon City for rehabilitation.

Meanwhile, the BoC-

NAIA seized some 1,269 pieces of Ecstasy tablets from the Netherlands.

Talusan said the 1,269 pieces of Ecstasy were found by alert customs examiners at the Central Mail Exchange Center in a package declared as "light box" containing three self-sealing plastic bags from the Netherlands sent by a certain G. Voothuzen.



56 iguanas seized at NAIA

Bureau of Customs (BOC) officers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport confiscated 56 iguanas brought by a Filipino traveler from Bangkok, Thailand at past midnight yesterday.

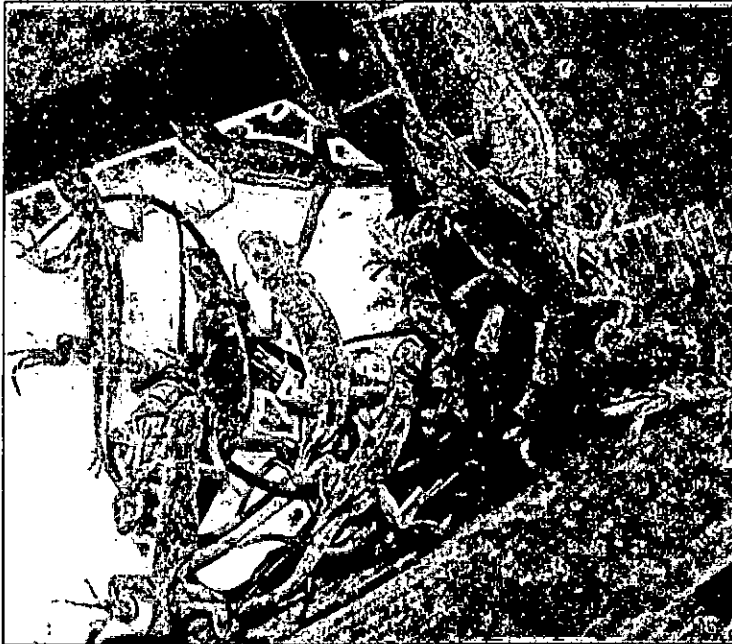
In front of Neil Ryan Dysoco, BOC officers examined two pieces of his luggage and found the iguanas, five of which were dead.

Some of the iguanas were placed in black socks while others were placed in a water bottle. The lizards were turned over to Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officials at the airport.

Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act said any individual must secure a permit to bring out or import wildlife.

Arnel Mataro of the DENR said the iguanas will be brought to the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City.

- Rudy Santos



Iguanas, smuggled in black socks and a water bottle by a traveler from Thailand, are prepared for turnover to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday.

RUDY SANTOS



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THE Bureau of Customs foiled an attempt to smuggle into the country 56 iguanas found inside the luggage of Filipino traveler Neil Ryan Kho Dysoco who arrived via Philippine Airlines flight PR737 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport from Bangkok, Thailand yesterday. (All Vicoy)



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From PREDATORS To PROTECTORS

*RP Energy moves to save endangered
'pawikans' in Zambales*



ACT OF FAITH. Volunteers, together with Pawicare rangers, in Brgy. La Paz, San Narciso, Zambales, watch as turtle hatchlings touch their flippers on the sand for the first time, and begin their long crawl to their home, the sea.



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From Predators to Protectors

SAN NARCISO, Zambales — It used to be that these delicate eggs hatched by gentle creatures from the sea ended up in fisherfolk's household pots. They were a delicacy and also a source of livelihood. Back in the 1990s, even earlier, marine turtle or pawikan eggs would sell for double the price of chicken eggs, making them a prize catch for poachers.

Today, alarmed by the drastically declining numbers of pawikans, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and its private sector partners have come up with laws and complementary efforts to stop their capture

Meralco PowerGen through the initiative of its power development arm Redondo Peninsula Energy (RP Energy) is one of these partners. The company has been strengthening its marine turtle or pawikan conservation efforts over the past few years at the Pawicare hatchery, a sea turtle conservation site in San Narciso, Zambales.

Community rangers. Earlier this month, RP Energy volunteers together with the local government of San Narciso and the local fisherfolk dubbed the "La Paz rangers" converged on the seaside facility and released some 60 new hatchlings and in the process learned more about the local sustainability efforts for these fascinating sea creatures.

The Pawicare hatchery is currently managed by Katimpuyog Zambales, an environmental organization that has partnered with the San Narciso Local Government Unit (LGU) and the La Paz rangers. The rescue and hatchery facility has a temporary shelter and other facilities for the rescue, rehabilitation, conservation, protection and care of pawikans in Zambales.

It is considered necessary and crucial for the conservation of pawikans. The facility also takes

care of wounded and rescued pawikans that will be released to the ocean when it has completely healed and it is already healthy.

Malasakit and education. We admire the malasakit of the Pawicare volunteers to help preserve our rich biodiversity, said Litz Santana, vice president and head of external affairs at Meralco PowerGen.

Every Filipino, especially kids, should experience a pawikan-releasing activity at least once in their lifetime, added Jason Gavina, corporate social responsibility officer of RP Energy.

This is how we can effectively teach them the value of protecting our environment while at the same time learning more about our rich biodiversity.

Besides regular releases of new pawikan hatchlings, RP Energy has been promoting other efforts to save them, including a partnership last year with Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf Philippines in a forum titled "Lessons from Pawicare."

Protect the Bay is RP Energy's program for the protection and conservation of Subic Bay. Its members include partners from the Subic Bay Management Authority (SBMA), Local Government Units (LGUs), as well as private

sector organizations such as JCI, Olongapo Kabalikatan, Civicom, the Rotary and Rotaract Clubs. The group organizes coastal clean-up activities, recycled art competitions, river clean-ups, information drives, environmental forums and other related programs.



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From Prefectors to Protectors



SEAS THE DAY! The baby turtles, each usually no bigger than a fist, are released with care and reverence. The pawikans, once small eggs, crawl unsteadily to meet the sea, and swim energetically once they reach it.



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PEOPLES
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Tonight

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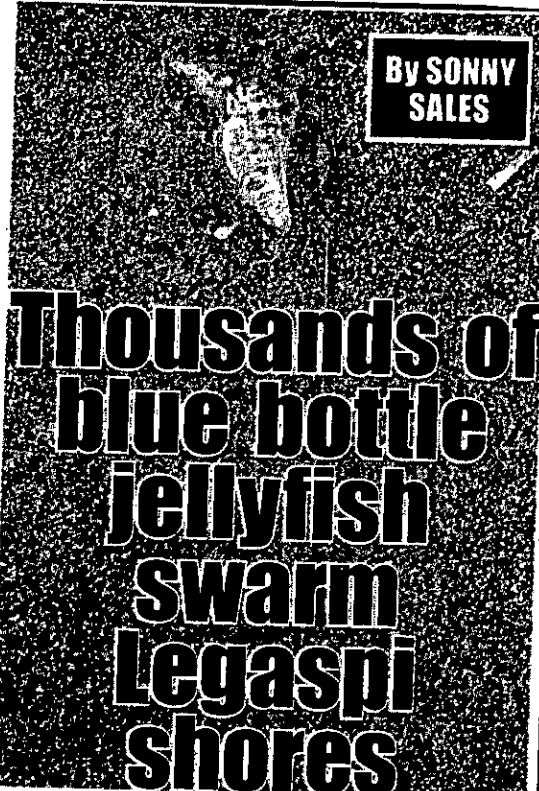
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By **SONNY SALES**

Thousands of blue bottle jellyfish swarm Legaspi shores

SWARMS of blue bottle jellyfish were sighted along the seashores of Barangays Puro and Rawis in Albay, including other coastal areas of the province starting early this month.

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Legazpi-based biologist Cyrus Job Dela Cruz said he posted a photo of the swarms of "blue bottle jellyfish", scientifically called, "Indo-Pacific-Manowar" on facebook to warn local residents that their sting could be toxic.

"They are part of a local marine-ecosystem, which is also food to growing Green-sea turtles common in Albay shores," Dela Cruz added.

Nonie Enolva, fishery expert of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) regional office in Camarines Sur warned local residents in Albay, that the sting of the blue bottle jellyfish is not as fatal as that of the box jellyfish, or "salibay" that stung and killed a young Filipina-European in Caramoan, Camarines Sur last year. A sting blue bottle jellyfish can result in skin irritation, or injuries, she noted.

(SONNY SALES)



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Zambales town mayor jailed for stopping mining operations

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE Sandiganbayan Third Division has sentenced to six years imprisonment Mayor Luisito Marty of Sta Cruz, Zambales for graft and usurpation of legislative powers for stopping the operations of two licensed mining firms in his municipality.

The anti-graft court sentenced Marty to a minimum of six years, five months, and 21 days in jail.

In its 42-page decision dated Feb. 15, the Sandiganbayan said Marty had no authority to halt the operations of Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. and the Zambales Chromite Mining Co. since they had secured licenses from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Mines

and Geosciences Bureau.

Based on court records, ZDMC and ZCMC filed the complaint against the mayor after the mining firms had a hard time securing business permits following a memorandum issued by Marty that required them to first secure a mayor's permit before they can pay their occupation fees to the municipal treasurer.

As far as the court is concerned, Marty "acted with evident bad faith when he issued the memorandum directing the municipal treasurer not to accept payment of occupation fees by the mining firms."

"In sum, the Court holds that accused Marty's unilateral issuance of a mere memorandum, which effectively prevented the ZDMC and

ZCMC from paying their occupation fees, and his inaction on the business permit application...without any sufficient legal basis and/or justification unquestionably manifest evident bad faith on his part," the court said.

The court added the two mining firms had secured valid mineral production sharing agreements from the national government, and that a business permit was not even required for companies to operate under Republic Act 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

In addition, the municipality accepted in the past occupation fee payments from ZDMC without demanding the submission of additional requirement.



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TYPE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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BENGUET FIRE
- A helicopter dumps water on a burning section of forest inside the Philex Mining Corporation area in Benguet Thursday. Three foresters and a villager were killed in the fire. (Contributed photo by Eliza Consul)



Fixing Baguio starts with tree, land survey

DENR checks uncontrolled construction, illegal settlers to stop city's decay

BAGUIO CITY—Environmental regulators have started an inventory of pine trees and lands in the summer capital, on the heels of a report that points to growing population as one of the main causes of its urban decay.

The survey and mapping office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is collating data on the pine trees to determine their age as well as how these can regenerate without human intervention.

The DENR is also examining the geological conditions of Baguio's private and public lands as well as their legal status, to determine if the government can reinstate a ban on houses on mountainsides with 18-degree slopes.

Carrying capacity

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu gave these instructions to the DENR office here over the weekend, saying that stopping developers from accessing steep slopes would end what he described as uncontrolled building constructions in the city.

Baguio's population of 345,000 is the optimum size, which its resources like water and road network can support, according to the initial results of the carrying capacity study commissioned by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Many residents can no



PINE ATTRACTION Baguio's pine cover has given the city its unique character that continues to attract tourists. —EV ESPIRITU

longer benefit from these resources once the population rises to 700,000, noted the study made by the consultancy group, Certeza Infosys Corp. The study findings were presented to Neda on Feb. 15.

Critical slopes

City residents have been complaining about the rising number of condominium and hotel projects to accommodate a "daytime" population of 720,000 people, including tourists and students. The population grows on certain hours of the day during weekdays.

Using satellite maps, Certeza consultants examined 19,016

structures in areas that were vulnerable to both rain and earthquake-induced landslides.

They classified 16 structures as perched on "very highly critical slopes," while 2,800 others were on "highly critical slopes." About 16,200 structures were on "moderately critical slopes."

Baguio's 1909 charter classifies the city as a townsite reservation. That means the whole city, which was designed and built by the American colonial government, is alienable and disposable.

But because of a proposition that the city's green cover should be 60 percent of its territory, the consultants ob-

served that the biodiversity of the forest cover (29 percent of the total land area) "is very low and may affect its ecological services."

Settlers

There are 3,361 informal settlers in forest areas (representing 4 percent of the 2015 city population), the study said, citing data from the DENR, the National Housing Authority and the city assessor's office.

The consultants proposed to relocate households from geologically hazardous areas as well as give incentives to real estate developers for improving the infrastructure and urban services of Baguio's neighboring towns.

This recommendation has been fulfilled by the establishment of an economic and social services cooperation between Baguio and the Benguet towns of La Trinidad, Itogon, Sablan, Tuba and Tublay. The concept was developed shortly after Baguio was devastated by the 1990 Luzon earthquake.

But to speed up the process, the DENR may seek an amendment to Presidential Decree No. 1998 which exempts the provinces of Benguet and Cebu from the national forest code rule on 18-degree slopes, said Benjamin Ventura, who is overseeing the task set by Cimatu. Baguio is within Benguet territory. —VINCENT CABREZA INQ