

DATE : 11 MAR 2019

DAY : Monday

# **DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

**Strategic Communication and Initiative Service**



# Aseana City commits to save, protect Manila Bay

LOCATED along Roxas Boulevard, Manila Bay is a natural harbor that hosts one of the world's most majestic sunsets.

However, hiding behind the alluring crimson rays of the sun are a collection of garbage and other pollutants from countless land and sea-based sources.

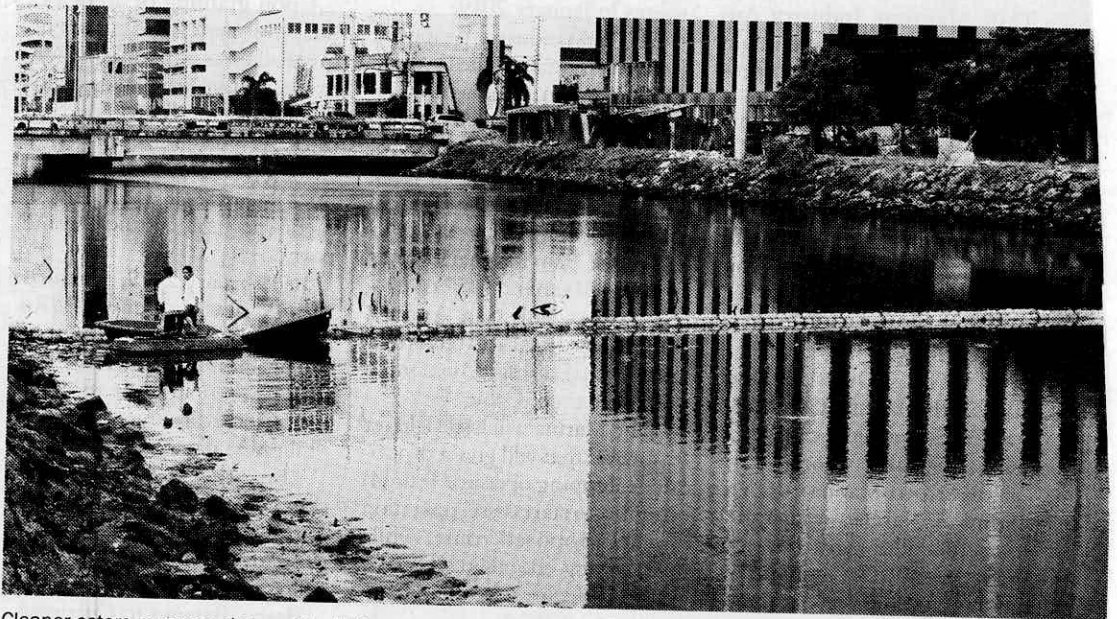
With the ambition to restore the bay to its former glory, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources started a three-year clean up campaign, dubbed as the Battle for Manila Bay.

While the massive cleanup focuses along the coast of Manila Bay, simultaneous activities are being done in various cities; one of which is the participation of Aseana City through the Adopt-an-Estero program.

Started on June 2013, Aseana Business Park Estate Association (ABPEA) partnered with DENR in rehabilitating the 1,404-meter Redemptorist Water Channel, stretching from Roxas Boulevard to Manila Bay.

Aseana City's assigned personnel collect an average of 60 to 70 sacks of garbage per week, produced by families living upstream in these canals. To date, ABPEA has already collected more than 168 metric tons of garbage.

Zeroing waste materials in these water channels might take a long time but can be sus-



Cleaner estero means a cleaner Manila Bay. Aseana City's volunteers during the kick off of the Battle for Manila Bay.

tained by the following means: (1) provision of boats to easily collect trapped waste materials, (2) Installation of floaters and water channel barricades that are made of steel, to the upper and lower area of the water channel, (2) regular clean-up action by Aseana City's very own volunteer cleaners, and the (3) innovative use of bio fences, inspired by Guatemala's clean up movement along the Caribbean islands.

"There are so many ways to help our environment bloom again. As

an individual, the easiest thing that you can do is to not litter. Pocket your trash. As an establishment owner, segregate waste materials," urged Rhiza Montances, Environmental Compliance Head - ABPEA.

Moreover, she shared that Aseana City aims to better the condition of waste disposal by spearheading environmental seminars directed to businesses and commercial estates within Aseana City. This effort includes proper segregation of garbage, treatment of wastewater dis-

charge, and strict implementation of waste management.

In the future, Aseana City hopes to give more life to its adopted estero by increasing pedestrian activity and beautifying the landscape along the water channel. Private institutions and establishments within Aseana City are also encouraged to take part in the clean-up. Creating healthy ecosystems and keeping the environment robust will always be one of Aseana City's fundamentals, as it progressively meets its goals of global development.



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# DILG exec rejects reclamation projects

BY CATHERINE A. MODESTO

**U**NDERSECRETARY Epimaco Densing Jr. of the Department of the Interior and Local Government opposed proposed reclamation projects in Manila Bay and expressed his willingness to resign to fight the implementation of these projects.

Densing said reclamation projects would displace thousands of informal settlers and destroy properties.

"Ako po sa personal, ayaw ko po

ng reclamation. *Wala pa po ako sa gobyerno, nilalaban ko na ang reclamation sa Manila Bay. At bumulong si Sec. [Eduardo] Año sa akin, ayoko rin ng reclamation*

(I am against reclamation. Even before I entered the government, I was fighting the Manila Bay reclamation. And Sec. Año, [the DILG secretary], whispered to me that he's also against the projects)," Densing said in a news forum on Sunday.

According to the Philippine Reclamation Authority, there are 19 projects lined up, four of which were approved by Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada.

These are the tourism hubs Manila Waterfront City and Horizon Manila of the J-Bros Construction

Corp., Manila Solar City of the Manila Goldcoast Development Corp., and City of Pearl of the UAA Kinming Group Development Corp.

The Manila Solar City project, a 148-hectare tourism and commercial hub, which was approved by Estrada in 2012, is already in the engineering stage, according to the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

"*Napakasimple ng explanation 'dyan, pag baso ng tubig nilagyan mo ng ice, tataas ang tubig.* (The explanation there is so simple. If you put ice on a glass of water,

the water would overflow.) There will be flooding in Metro Manila. That's a million percent sure)," Densing said.

He cited the flooding of Roxas Boulevard in Manila last year, where a sea of garbage washed up.

He warned that thousands of people would be displaced if these reclamation projects were implemented.

"*Pwede ako mag-resign, labanan ko yung reclamation* (I can resign. I will fight the reclamation)," he said.

Densing expressed

confidence that President Rodrigo Duterte would reject the reclamation projects.

"*Tingnan po natin anong mang-yayari po 'dyan, nasa Pangulo na ang huling pagde-desisyon.* Pero knowing the President, *simple lamang po siya, pag ang isang proyekto di nakabubuti sa taong bayan, wala nang isip isip yan, 'No.'*" (Let's see what will happen. The President has the final say. But knowing him, he's simple. If a project does not promote common good, without thinking, he would say no)," he said.



Editorial

## Maraming makikinabang 'pag nalinis ang Manila Bay

**M**AKAPAL ang burak at maraming basura sa Manila Bay. Sa tagal nang panahon na hindi ito nahukay at napalalim, aabutin nang mahigit isang buwan ang pagtatrabaho rito. Inumpisahan na noong nakaraang linggo ang pagpapalalim at nakakulekta na ng 225,000 cubic meters ng burak at basura. Mga modernong equipment ang ginagamit para mapabilis ang paghuhukay. Labing-anim na oras nag-ooperate ang mga ito at inaasahang maku-kuha ang target date para ganap na malinis. Ayon sa mga namamasyal sa kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard, nabawasan na ang masangsang na amoy na nagmumula sa dagat. Magandang palatandaan ito na ang ibig sabihin, unti-unti nang nawawala ang burak at mga basura.

Sabi naman ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), tuluy-tuloy ang ginagawang dredging kahit pa may mga bumabatikos at

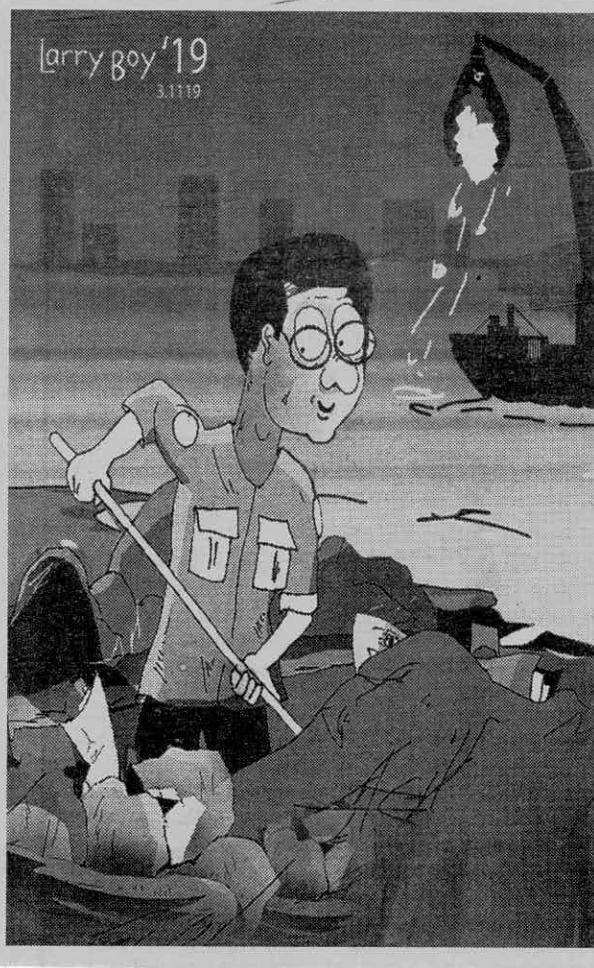
tumututol dito. Binabatikos ng grupong Pamalakaya ang ginagawang dredging sa Manila Bay sapagkat apektado na umano ang pinagkukunan ng ikabubuhay ng mga maliliit na mangingisda.

Dahil daw sa paghuhukay, kakaunti na lamang ang nahuhuli ng mga mangingisda. Kung dati raw ay nakakahuli ng 15 kilos ng isda mula naag simulan ang dredging ay 2 hanggang 5 kilos na lamang ang nahuhuli.

Malaking problema umano para sa mga maliliit na mangingisda ang pagpapalalim sa Manila Bay. Saan daw kukuha ng ikabubuhay ang mga ito? Kawawa naman lalo't may mga pamilya.

Hiling ng Pamalakaya, dapat bigyan ng pamahalaan ng pagkakakitaan at pagkukunan ng ikabubuhay ang mga apektadong mangingisda. Binatikos din ng grupo ang ginagawang reklamasyon sa Manila Bay at hiniling sa DENR na hadlangan ang "full-scale sellout" ng makasaysayang lawa. Ayon sa Pamalakaya, 43 ang naka-pending na reclamation projects sa Manila Bay. Sasakupin ng projects ang 30,000 ektarya ng lawa.

Huwag paapekto ang DENR sa mga batikos na karaniwang lumilikha lang ng gulo at nagpapapansin. Namumulitika lang at walang magawa. Ang ginagawang pag-aalis sa burak at basura ay dapat lang isakatuparan para maging malinis na ang Manila Bay at nang mayroon nang mabuhay na mga isda. Kung hindi lilinisin, ano ang huhulihing lamandagat. Dahil sa rumi ng Manila Bay, maraming namamatay na isda at maaaring sa hinaharap ay wala nang mahuli rito.







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**BAY BATH** A man and his daughter cool off by taking a bath in Manila Bay on Sunday. Authorities had warned that the bay remains unfit for swimming despite the regular clean-up drive launched by various groups.  
PHOTO BY ROGER RANADA



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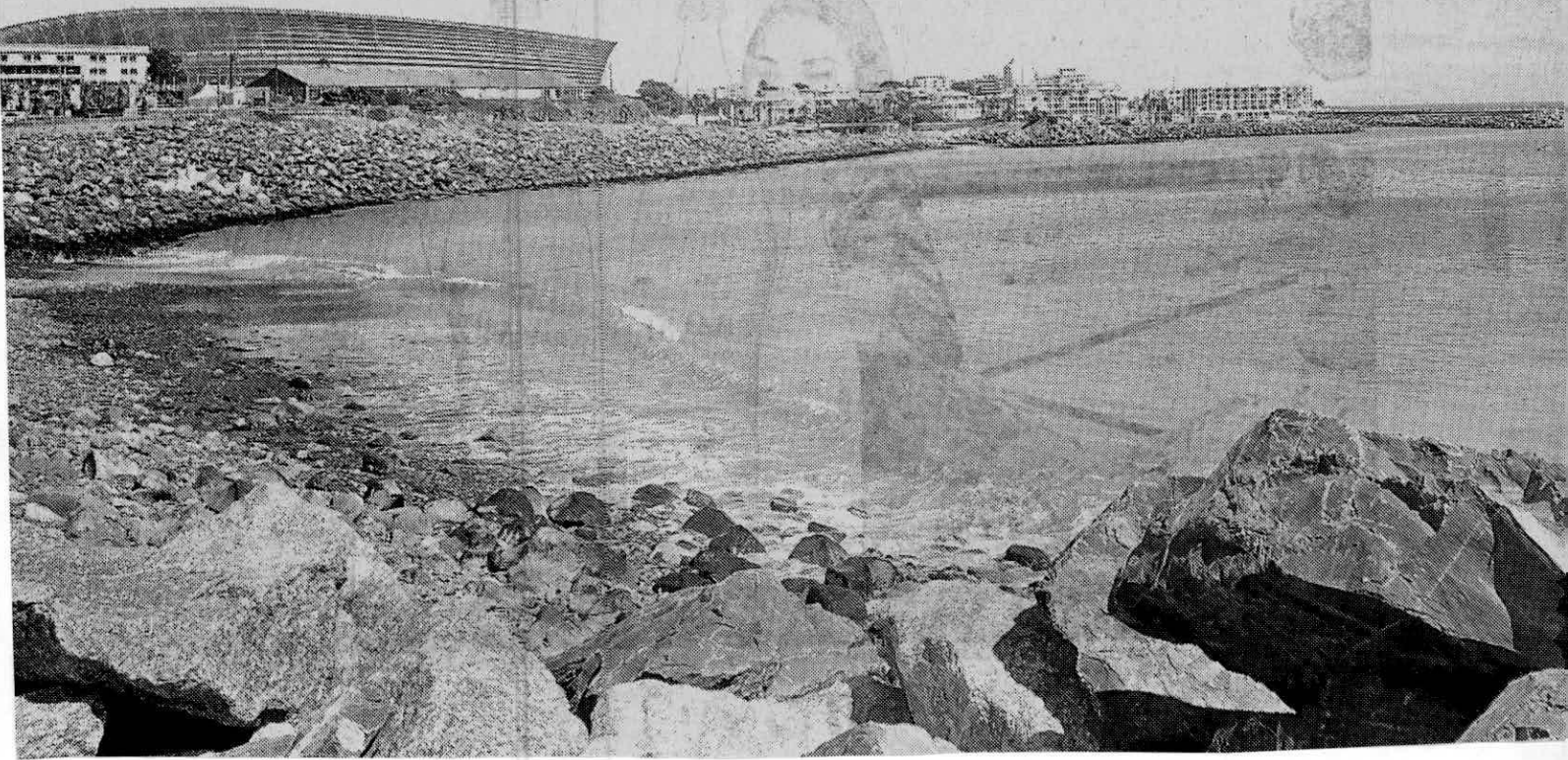
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**Sight to behold** Victoria Wharf in Cape Town, South Africa offers a breathtaking view which may soon be the same experience at the coast of Manila Bay amid the rehabilitation efforts.

KATH LLEMIT





Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
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**NASA** Manila Bay ang pansin ngayon ng buong sambayanan at mga opisyal ng gobyerno kaya tila nakalimutan nang silipin ang esterong ito sa Old Torres St., Tondo, isa sa mga tributaryo ng Ilog Pasig na punong-puno ngayon ng basura at kung hindi malilinis bago ang tag-ulan ay maaaring maging sanhi ng baha sa lungsod ng Maynila.

(Kuha ni ROMULO BALANQUIT)

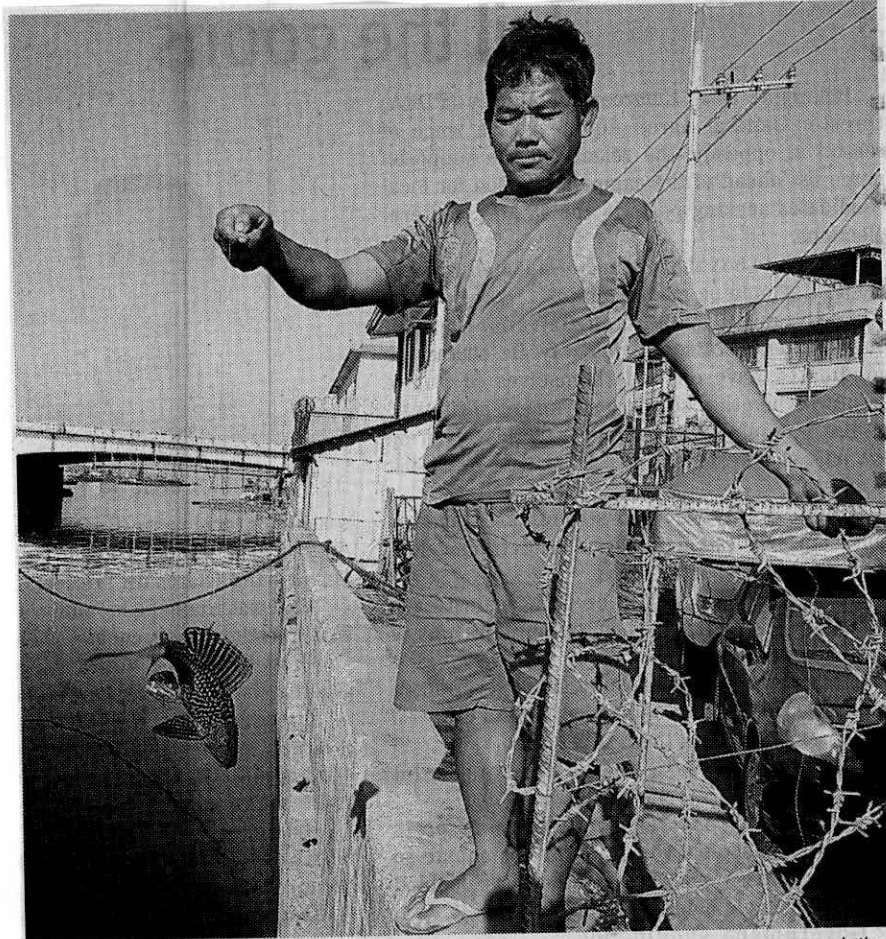


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**For real** Man reels in a janitor fish from the Pasig River. The fish was once seen as a solution to clean the waters until it took over the aquatic population. BOB DUNGO JR.





## Conglomerate spends P5.6B on CSR

SAN MIGUEL Corp. (SMC) said its spending for social and environmental initiatives across its businesses reached P5.6 billion to date.

Ferdinand Constantino, chairman of the San Miguel Foundation, said the company is gradually reworking its corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy in ways that “transcend the traditional thinking on corporate giving, expanding the reach of our programs and engaging our employees and other stakeholders.”

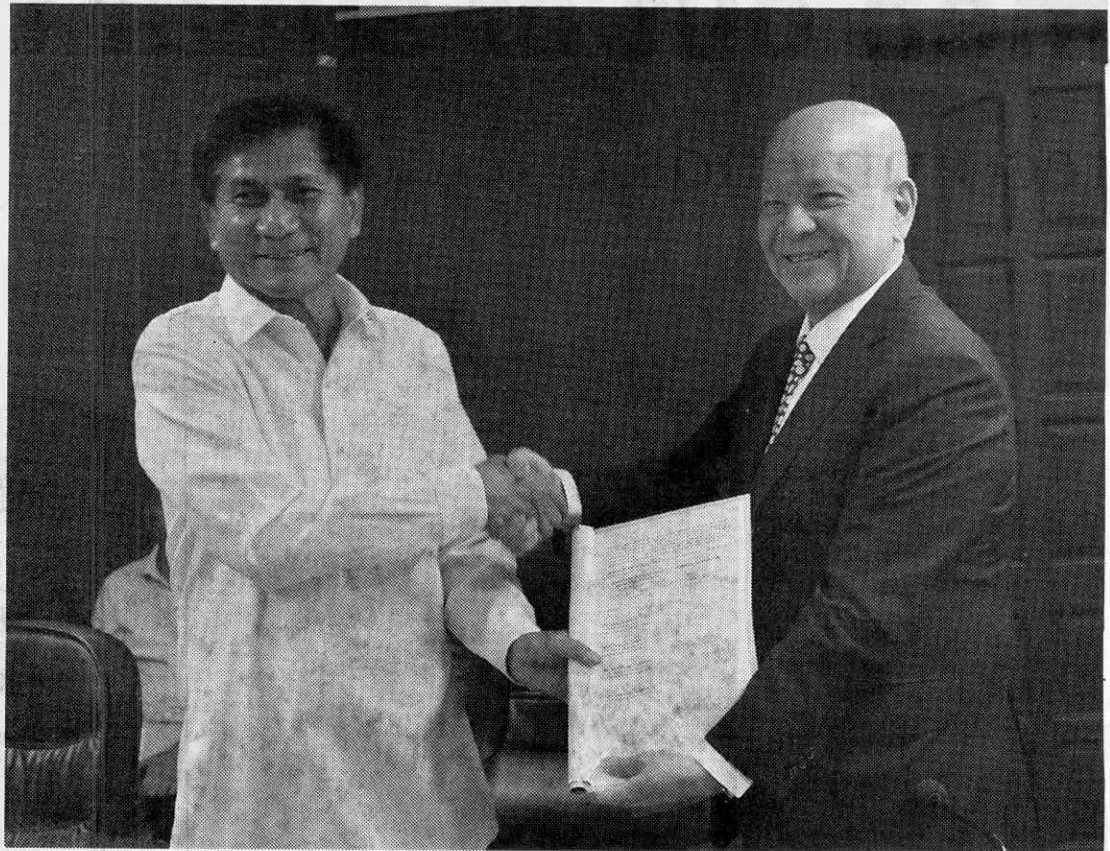
For 2018, much of the company’s resources for CSR were focused on developing meaningful partnerships and socio-economic opportunities to various disadvantaged communities nationwide, SMC said.

Through its San Miguel Foundation, the company spent P332 million to provide livelihood opportunities to over 160 families of soldiers and policemen killed in action during the Marawi siege.

Assistance for disaster response and rebuilding as of 2018 has reached P1.3 billion while housing programs for the underprivileged totaled P1.1 billion to date.

Other initiatives of the foundation include granting of scholarships, providing for medical needs of people in conflict areas through the construction of hospitals and donation of medical equipment.

To help government curb smuggling and boost its capacity to preserve peace and order in various communities, the foundation



**Latest Initiative.** SMC pledged P1 billion to undertake, together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources an extensive cleanup of the Tullahan River system. SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon Ang and DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu shake hands after the signing of the recently five-year agreement.

donated P126 million worth of Rapiscan mobile X-ray units to the Bureau of Customs and 50 units of BMW motorcycles to the Philippine National Police.

SMC said its CSR programs are aligned with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reflecting the company continuing commitment to sustainability.

In adherence to the sixth

SDG that pushes for clean water and sanitation, San Miguel has significantly started to reduce its water footprint through its “Water For All” sustainability project. As of the end of 2018, SMC and its subsidiaries saved 7.7 billion liters on “non-product water” that represented a 23 percent reduction, surpassing its goal to cut water use by 20 percent by 2020.

SMC also discontinued its plastic bottled water business to reduce its environment impact and will utilize the Purewater brand in filtration technology to provide clean and safe drinking water to people in flooded areas during calamities.

SMC also supports victims of recent calamities, conducts regular medical missions and help send indigent students to college.



MISSION TO DO GOOD

# SMC'S SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENTS REACH P5.6B

By **Daxim L. Lucas**  
@daxINQ

San Miguel Corp.—the country's biggest conglomerate—has so far spent P5.6 billion for its social and environmental advocacies nationwide, with more funds to be allocated in the coming years, the chair of its charitable arm said.

San Miguel Foundation chair Ferdinand Constantino said the group that spans beer brewing to big-ticket transportation infrastructure projects was set to further ramp up efforts to "address the country's most pressing challenges."

"It has always been our mission to do good. It's in our DNA," he said in a statement. "Through our efforts, big and small, we hope to lead the charge in terms of how we give back to society and the environment."

Last year, the bulk of the company's resources for corporate social responsibility initiatives was focused on developing meaningful partnerships and socio-economic opportunities for various disadvantaged communities nationwide.

"We are gradually reworking our CSR strategy in ways that transcend the traditional thinking on corporate giving, expanding the reach of our programs and engaging our employees and other stakeholders so that

more people can have a vessel to make a difference and participate in causes that are close to our hearts," said Constantino, who is also the chief financial officer of the parent holding firm.

He added that SMC's corporate giving had been catalyzing solutions to both societal and environmental challenges such as crime, unemployment, poverty, natural disasters, lack of infrastructure and basic services, water security, waste disposal, among others.

Through its San Miguel Foundation, the company spent P332 million to provide livelihood opportunities to more than 160 families of soldiers and policemen killed in action during the Marawi siege.

Assistance for disaster response and rebuilding as of 2018 has reached P1.3 billion while housing programs for the underprivileged totalled P1.1 billion to date.

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The foundation donated P126 million worth of Rapiscan mobile X-ray units to the Bureau of Customs and 50 units of BMW motorcycles to the Philippine National Police. INQ



## SMC spends for social, environmental ills

By focusing our corporate giving efforts to lifting people out of poverty, raising their standards of living, making lives better, we hope to further make a huge impact on Philippine society

San Miguel Corp. (SMC) said spending for social and environmental initiatives across its businesses reached P5.6 billion to date as it vows to further step up efforts and make an even greater impact in addressing the country's most pressing challenges.

"It has always been our mission to do good. It's in our DNA. Through our efforts, big and small, we hope to lead the charge in terms of how we give back to society and the environment," says Ferdinand Constantino, chairman of the San Miguel Foundation.

For 2018, much of the company's resources for corporate social responsibility (CSR) were focused on developing meaningful partnerships and socio-economic opportunities to various disadvantaged communities nationwide.

"We are gradually reworking our CSR strategy in ways that transcend the traditional thinking on corporate giving, expanding the reach of our programs and engaging our employees and other stakeholders so that more people can have a vessel to make a difference and participate in causes that are close to our hearts," Constantino said.

**Other initiatives of the foundation include granting of scholarships, providing for medical needs of people in conflict areas through the construction of hospitals and donation of medical equipment.**

He added that SMC's corporate giving has been catalyzing solutions to both societal and environmental challenges, such as crime, unemployment, poverty, natural disasters, lack of infrastructure and basic services, water security and waste disposal.

Through its San Miguel Foundation, the company spent P332 million to provide livelihood opportunities to over 160 families of soldiers and policemen killed in action during the Marawi siege. The program, which granted access to a P2-million business startup package for each family helps ensure they have a long-term sustainable source of income.

Assistance for disaster response and rebuilding as of 2018 has reached P1.3 billion while housing programs for the underprivileged totaled P1.1 billion to date.

Other initiatives of the foundation include granting of scholarships, providing for medical needs of people in conflict areas through the construction of hospitals and donation of medical equipment.

To help government curb smuggling and boost its capacity to preserve peace and order in various communities, the foundation donated P126 million worth of Rapiscan mobile X-ray units to the Bureau of Customs (BoC) and 50 units of BMW motorcycles to the Philippine National Police (PNP).

"These are just some of the programs we implemented to help enable different sectors of our society to contribute to our country's growth and development," Constantino said, adding that "by focusing our corporate giving efforts to lifting people out of poverty, raising their standards of living, making lives better, we hope to further make a huge impact on Philippine society."



## SMC gumugol ng ₱5.6B para sa proyektong pang-CSR, kalikasan

Gumugol na ang San Miguel Corporation (SMC) ng ₱5.6 bilyon para sa CSR at inisyatibong pangkalikasan upang makatulong na solusyunan ang maraming suliranin ng bansa.

"We are gradually reworking our CSR strategy in ways that transcend the traditional thinking on corporate giving, expanding the reach of our programs and engaging our employees and other

stakeholders so that more people can have a vessel to make a difference and participate in causes that are close to our hearts," wika ni Ferdinand Constantino, chairman ng San Miguel Foundation.

Sa pamamagitan ng San Miguel Foundation, nagbigay ang SMC ng ₱332 milyon para mabigyan ng kabuhasan ang 160 pamilya ng mga sundalo at pulis na nasawi sa bakbakan sa Marawi. Ang naturang programa ay nagbibigay ng ₱2 milyon na business startup package para matustusan ang pangangailan ng mga pamilya.

Para sa mga kalamidad at rehabilitasyon ng mga apektadong lugar, gumugol ang

SMC ng ₱1.3 bilyon hangang ang mga housing program ay umaabot na sa ₱1.1 bilyon hangang sa kasalukuyan.

Ang iba pang programa ng San Miguel Foundation ay pagbibigay ng mga scholarship, pagpapagamot sa mga tao na nasa tinatawag na 'conflict areas' sa pamamagitan ng pagtatayo ng ospital at donasyon ng medical equipment.

Upang matulungan ang pamahalaan laban sa smuggling at pagpapanatili ng peace and order sa mga komunidad ay nag-donate ang foundation ng Rapiscan mobile X-ray na nagkakahalaga ng ₱126 milyon sa Bureau of Customs at 50 motorsiklong BMW sa Philippine National Police.

Ang mga programa ng SMC ay sumasangayon sa Sustainable Development Goals ng United Nations. Kabilang dito ang proyektong 'Water For All' na sa pagtatapos ng 2018 ay nakapagtipid na ang kompanya ng 7.7 bilyong litro ng tubig. Ito ay kabawasan ng 23 porsiyento, lampas sa 20 porsiyento na target sa taong 2020.

Itinigil na rin ng kompanya ang paggawa ng de-boteng tubig upang mabawasan ang tinatawag na environmental impact. Gagamitin na lang ang Purewater filtration technology para mabigyan ng tubig ang mga komunidad na apektado ng pagbaha tuwing may kalamidad.





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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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# Online biodiversity monitoring in pipeline

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

**A** multi-sectoral initiative is forming to develop an online biodiversity monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to meet the Philippine targets for biodiversity conservation.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), and ADEC Innovations Corporation committed to work together to develop the online system.

The platform is one of BIOFIN Philippines' 21 finance solutions all aimed at narrowing the huge financing gap for the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) implementation, the country's roadmap to sustainably manage its biodiversity.

It will track the progress of the implementation of the PB-

SAP, while mobilizing resources from various mechanisms, such as corporate social responsibility, crowd-funding, diaspora or migrant philanthropy, and impact investment.

It is also envisioned to foster transparency and accountability on investments made for biodiversity thereby increasing both public and private sector participation to unlock capital towards sustainable biodiversity financing.

This is in the context that there is an estimated gap of almost P19 billion (US\$349 million) in the annual budget from 2015 to 2028) for biodiversity efforts in the Philippines.

ADEC Innovations Corporation recognizes the importance of developing such a platform.

"We at ADEC Innovations see the value in developing this platform as a way to achieve the Philippines' targets for biodiversity conservation," said James Donovan, CEO of ADEC Innovations.



## THREATENED PHILIPPINE WILDLIFE

# 'Unique species in the brink of extinction'

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By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](https://twitter.com/jonlmayuga)

**O**N March 3 Philippine authorities intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport more than 1,500 live turtle species being smuggled into the country by an unidentified passenger from Hong Kong.

Incidentally, the confiscation of the assorted turtle species, the cost of which range from P8,000 to P25,000 each, came at a time when the Philippines is celebrating World Wildlife Day 2019, which is aligned with Goal 14, or Life Below Water, of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations.

Airport authorities turned over the contraband to wildlife law enforcers of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) after the suspect flee.

Both a buyer and seller of illegally traded wildlife, particularly for the lucrative pet trade, the Philippines has been identified as a transshipment point of illegally traded wildlife products and by-products used for health and wellness, medicine or "mystical cure" and amulets, furniture and furniture displays, accessories and jewelry.

Illegal wildlife trade is just one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss.

### Biodiversity hot spot

THE country hosts a total of 52,177 species, more than half of which are found nowhere else in the world.

"On a per unit area basis, the Philippines probably harbors more diversity of life than any other country on the planet," the DENR-BMB web site said.

While the Philippines is rich in biodiversity, it is also considered a biodiversity hot spot because of the rapid rate of biodiversity loss because of numerous threats.

Many species—including iconic animals and birds—are threatened with extinction.

A total of 1,437 terrestrial mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians are listed as threatened under DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 2004-15 and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora as of 2015. Of these, 711 are endemic species, or species that can be found only in the Philippines.

Under the list, 28 species of mammals, birds and reptiles were classified as critically endangered; 116 species, endangered; 85 species, vulnerable; and 11 species are listed as other threatened species.

Among the critically endangered is the tamaraw, Philippine spotted deer, Visayan spotted deer, dugong, Visayan warty pig, Philippine eagle, Peregrine falcon, Sulu hornbill, Philippine cockatoo, the Philippine crocodile and saltwater crocodile.

There are also 984 species of wild flora on the threatened list, 179 of which are critically endangered; 254 are endangered; 406 are vulnerable; 145 other threatened species.

### Driver of biodiversity loss

CITING Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2028, Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez of the DENR-BMB said five major threats that lead to biodiversity loss in the Philippines are overexploitation, climate change, pollution, invasive alien species and habitat loss.

Rodriguez said in an interview through Messenger that overexploitation is linked to over-harvesting, illegal and overfishing and illegal wildlife trad.

These activities, she said, result in disasters—like drought, due to timber harvesting, which also leads to landslides; coral-reef siltation; groundwater depletion; and, eventually, increased carbon emissions because our carbon sinks are destroyed or devastated.



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On the other hand, habitat loss is linked to deforestation, mining, marine ecosystem degradation, which also leads to flood, drought, landslide and coral-reef siltation.

"Climate change causes sea-level rise, warmer seas and stronger storms [that] lead to species decline, fisheries decline, coastal flooding, coral-reef degradation, and infrastructure damage. Intensive agrochemical use can be linked to pollution, which also causes eutrophication, siltation, water pollution and disease/health risks. Invasive alien species cause decline/extinction of native species which lead to pest infestation and disease outbreak among species," she said.

### Habitat loss, pollution other threats

FOR environmental group Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE), habitat loss is the single biggest cause of wholesale biodiversity loss.

"Thousands of hectares of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems—and the species they sustain—are lost to land grabs by large-scale mines, dams, reclamation and other extractive and destructive projects," Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan-PNE, told the BUSINESSMIRROR through Messenger.

According to Dulce, the pollution of ecosystems also renders habitats unlivable and causes harm to the health of various organisms.

"Some pollutants are biomagnified along the food chain, eventually accumulating in larger species, such as humans," he said.

On the other hand, he explained that illegal wildlife trade is a targeted threat to species, whereby wildlife are hunted for various purposes, such as alternative medicine, exotic meat and valuables.

"The large-scale demand for their by-products drives the large-scale poaching of these species," he said.

On the other hand, he added that climate change is a slow onset risk that radically disrupts the living conditions of flora and fauna because of increased temperature, sea-level rise, melting ice caps and extreme weather events, among others.

"Entire bioregions can be rendered inhospitable to their in-

habitants over the next century," he said.

Dulce added that the attacks against environmental defenders is often overlooked, but are intrinsic in habitat and biodiversity loss because these advocates are the first and last line of defense for entire landscapes.

"The killings, displacement and other human-rights violations the [environmental] defenders face not only serve to paralyze the defense of ecosystems, but also contribute to the loss of ecologically sensitive culture, such as the indigenous people's knowledge and practices in the process," he said.

### Problems, solutions

ACCORDING to Dulce, the Duterte administration has failed to arrest habitat loss as its various pronouncements against extractive and destructive projects fall short in action.

He said the large-scale mines have increased in number over the past three years, while up to 10 large dams are in the pipeline.

"More reclamation projects are being approved in areas supposedly for protection or rehabilitation. Reforestation efforts, oftentimes using bad practices, such as planting exotic species and promoting timber plantations, cannot keep up with the deforestation rate of old-growth forests," he said.

According to Dulce, the Duterte administration should support proposed laws, such as the People's Mining Bill, the House resolution declaring Manila Bay as a reclamation-free zone and other policies that will prohibit extractive and destructive projects, to conserve and protect ecosystems and the wildlife that thrives therein.

He added that a law safeguarding the rights of environmental defenders, "the natural nurturers of our environment," should be enacted and implemented.

What else can the government do? He said: "Our Environmental Impact Statement system must be reformed to democratize the process. More protected areas should be designated and subsidized.

"Communities must be seen as central to the management of these areas, and not treated as problems. The national economy must be planned in such a way that the utilization of natural resources is judiciously based on what communities and our national economy need, not on corporate greed."

### Government, policy gaps

AA YAPTINCHAY of the Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines, for his part, said the major threats to marine biodiversity include direct exploitation, incidental catch in fisheries, encroachment and degradation of habitats, marine debris and plastic pollution, poor ocean literacy of the public and decision-makers, and climate change.

Sadly, he said government efforts proved inadequate, adding that it needs to muster the support of other sectors to do the job.

"No one person or organization can do enough. The best will always be done through collaborations and partnerships with multiple agencies and individuals. There may be enough laws, but enforcement and implementation are always problematic. There will always be challenges in terms of funds, manpower, and support and many other things. We just have to do our best with limited resources," he said.

To protect and conserve the country's rich marine biodiversity, Yaptinchay said in terms of laws and policy, the gaps need to be addressed.

"Where there are protection laws existing, these should be enforced. Conservation programs need to be implemented fully. But the short-term solution is never enough. We need to be thinking long-term by addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss, such as poverty, corruption and lack of awareness," he said.

### Global problem

THE rapid rate of biodiversity loss in the Philippines reflects a global problem. Even its neighbors in Southeast Asia are facing the same problems, said Executive Director Theresa Mundita





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S. Lim of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

ACB's response to the rapid rate of biodiversity loss hinges on activities under the five-year Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean (BCAMP) project 2017-2021.

BCAMP activities include improving the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation and protected areas management in Asean site-level interventions that aim to improve biodiversity conservation and that effective protected area management will be implemented.

Under the project, activities that support the implementation of the Asean Heritage Parks (AHP) Programme will also be conducted to boost conservation and protection of wildlife and their habitats.

The site-level activities in the Philippines include those in Mounts Iglit-Baco and Pasonanca national parks.

"ACB recognizes that protected areas and AHPs, if properly and effectively managed, are important tools to protect and conserve endangered species," Lim, a former DENR-BMB Director told the BUSINESSMIRROR via e-mail last week.

"The rationale for identifying the protected areas in the first place is that the areas rich in biodiversity, meaning they support a variety of species and of ecosystems that support the diversity of unique and rare species," she said.

"If we protect our protected areas, we are protecting the species that inhabit them. And protection can be in the form of several measures. [These include] effective enforcement [and for ACB, it could facilitate transboundary enforcement work, as well], sustainable biodiversity-based and community-based livelihoods, education and communication of the benefits of protection," she added.

## 'Uniquely at risk'

THE Philippines, being an archipelago, has its advantages and disadvantages when it comes to protecting and conserving wildlife and their unique island ecosystems.

According to Lim, island ecosystems are ideally "closed systems," often gifted with unique species (island endemic) interacting among themselves and can be easy demonstration sites for ridge-to-reef approach.

However, they are also the ecosystems that are most vulnerable to species extinctions.

"Because the species are found only on the island and nowhere else, their limited range makes them easily become endangered," she explained.

Invasive species can also easily upset the ecological balance on island ecosystems.

"Of course, we have heard that the islands are also the most vulnerable to climate-change impacts, such as sea-level rise," she noted.

## Wildlife conservation, protection

TO address the problem of biodiversity loss, Rodriguez said the government, through the DENR-BMB, continues to implement various programs.

Wildlife protection and conservation programs include strengthening of law enforcement, designation and management of critical habitats, conservation efforts for critically endangered species, and prevention, control and/or eradication of invasive alien species.

Marine and coastal biodiversity conservation program, on the other hand, includes the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program; establishment of marine protected areas, coastal and marine rehabilitation and standardizing approach in monitoring (Green Fins); and monitoring and updating coastal and marine data resources under the Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures Project.

The DENR-BMB also implements a communication, education and public awareness program and promotes biodiversity-friendly livelihoods and technology.

The DENR-BMB pushed to strengthen the policy for biodiversity conservation, such as the passage of Republic Act 11038 Expanded-National Integrated Protected Areas System Act.

To rally the support of the people in protecting and conserving the country's rich marine biodiversity, Rodriguez said the DENR-BMB is pushing to mainstream biodiversity in government programs and promotes stricter enforcement and implementation of environmental laws; and include biodiversity in school modules in partnership with the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education, and help build capacities of local government units.





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Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

*A broader look at today's business*



**AN adult Philippine eagle and its young. Critically endangered, around 400 pairs of the endemic species are left in the wild. PHILIPPINE EAGLE FOUNDATION**

**“** On a per unit area basis, the Philippines probably harbors more diversity of life than any other country on the planet.”—DENR-BMB



## Responsible marine wildlife tourism

**THE environment department's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) is planning to finalize soon the guidelines on marine wildlife tourism (MWT) in the country.**

The guidelines, drawn up in collaboration with the agriculture and tourism departments, aim to protect marine wildlife from tourism's adverse impact such as habitat destruction, BMB Wildlife Resources Division chief Josefina de Leon said.

"It's about being responsible wildlife tourists," she added.

De Leon said a joint administrative order of the environment, agriculture and tourism departments will spell out the guidelines.

According to Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, wildlife "means wild forms and varieties of flora and fauna, in all developmental stages, including those which are in captivity or are being bred or propagated."

Wildlife tourism is tourism that enables people to view wildlife in a natural setting.

De Leon said BMB hopes for issuance of the MWT guidelines soon as tourism continues to harm the country's marine wildlife.

"For example, turtles are caught and tied to some resorts so tourists there can swim with these animals," she said, adding that binding turtles is harmful to these animals from the wild.

Last year, the World Bank (WB) said the demand for all types of nature tourism -- particularly adventure tourism and wildlife tourism -- is predicted to expand rapidly over the next two decades.

The WB added that protecting and sustainably managing wildlife and its natural habitat will help promote the growth of nature-based tourism.

De Leon said there is already a draft MWT order prepared before En-

vironment Secretary Roy Cimatu assumed his post.

draft was not acted upon so we're reviving it," she said, noting that discussions on the matter are in progress.

"We're reviewing the draft to see if it's sufficient," she noted.

If found sufficient, she said the BMB will endorse the draft to the environment department for its consideration and Cimatu's approval.

According to the Department of Tourism (DOT), Palawan province's Calauit Island and Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park, Bohol province and Sorsogon province's Donsol municipality are among the Philippines' top wildlife destinations.

Calauit Island's game preserve and wildlife sanctuary is "straight out of Africa" while marine biodiversity-rich Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park is the Philippines' first natural site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, the DOT noted.





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# Boracay, El Nido hailed anew

**Boracay White Beach is cleaner and clear. It has maintained its popularity among tourists and locals**

The Department of Tourism's (DoT) thrust for sustainable tourism continues to gain traction with two of its flagship destinations — Boracay and El Nido, Palawan being listed among *TripAdvisor's* 2019 Travelers' Choice Awards.

Boracay White Beach, described as the island's most popular beach famous for its amazing sunsets and white sand that stays cool in hot weather, ranked ninth among the beaches in Asia in spite of its temporary closure last year.

El Nido, Palawan's Nacpan and Las Cabanas beaches were voted as the 13th and 22nd best islands in the region.

Meanwhile, the DoT, together with partner line agencies, Departments of Environment

and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has identified El Nido as among the destinations up for rehabilitation.

The tested trio of the Environment, Interior and Tourism secretaries mapped out the rehabilitation plan of El Nido late last year.

"We take it that this *TripAdvisor* citation of Boracay and El Nido is indicative of the positive reactions to the reforms and new policies being implemented in an effort to inculcate a culture of sustainable tourism. This bodes well with our campaign of highlighting the people's genuine testaments and reactions to our destinations,"

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat enthused.

*TripAdvisor's* 2019 Travelers' Choice Awards ranks beaches, destinations, attractions, among others based on millions of traveler review and opinion.

Boracay White Beach received over six thousand reviews with 62 percent excellent rave reviews and 24 percent very good rating, with most of the comments acknowledging the successful rehabilitation of the island.

**Be careful with the sun and always use your sunblock with high factor.**

"Boracay still has it! After the six months rehab Boracay White Beach is cleaner and clear. It has maintained its popularity among tourists and locals. It's really lovely during sunsets. The burst of colors are awesome. I saw garbage bins which were absent before,"

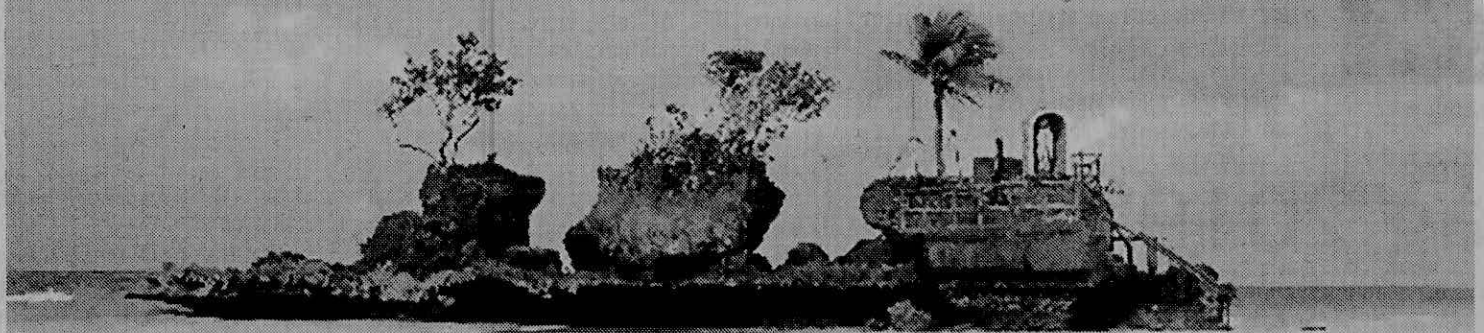
shared *TripAdvisor* reviewer mariasusnaf2018.

"The best beach in the world. Experience the new, renovated and clean White Beach of Boracay. It is excellent for watersports and I can swim here the whole day. Be careful with the sun and always use your sunblock with high factor. Food are excellent everywhere you go," commented jguzon from Oslo, Norway.

Yapak Beach, the second largest beach on Boracay named after the prevalent white puka seashells, was also listed at 25th.

As of 27 February, a total of 320 accommodation establishments in Boracay accounting for 11,662 rooms are now DoT-accredited.

"The Inter-Agency Task Force is excited for the completion of the island's rehabilitation; the second phase in April and the third in December this year. It will further promote a better Boracay and see *#MoreFunForever*," Puyat added.



BORACAY White Beach, described as the island's most popular destination.

## Boracay cruise ship ban imposed

By Vernadeth de los Santos

The government will restrict entry of international cruise ships in Boracay Island during the so-called peak seasons such as Holy Week, summer time and Christmas.

The move was aimed at avoiding overcrowding and ensure that only 6,405 tourists can enter the resort island per day.

Tourism regional director Helen Catalbas,

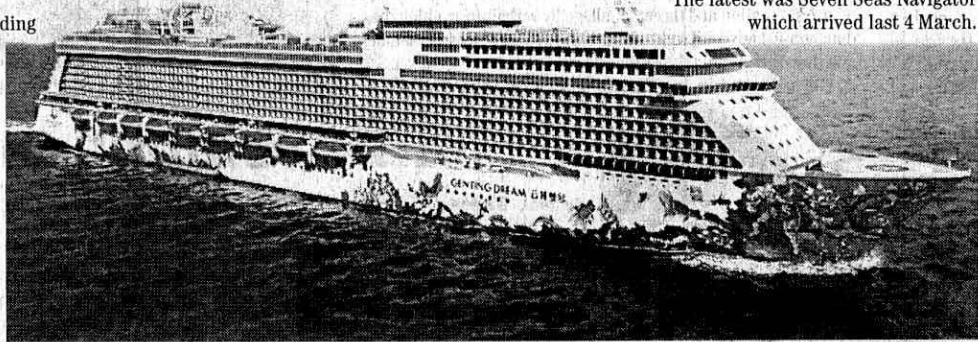
said it is during peak seasons that huge number of tourists is flocking to the island which could severely affect its still ongoing rehabilitation.

She added cruise ships passing Boracay Island usually carry 1,500 up to 4,500 passengers and staff.

Tourists have seven hours to explore the white-sand beach, souvenirs shops and restaurants since they don't need hotel accommodations.

Since reopening in October 2018 after a six-month closure, Boracay has only welcomed four cruise ships.

The latest was Seven Seas Navigator which arrived last 4 March.



**Off-limits** Luxury liners will be banned in Boracay Island during peak seasons.





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# LA MESA DAM WATER BREAKS CRITICAL LEVEL

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**Consumers in Metro Manila and parts of Rizal province are bracing for water rationing as water level at La Mesa Dam drops to 68.93 meters on Sunday afternoon.**

**By Patricia Denise M. Chiu**  
@PDMChiuINQ

Water rationing in Metro Manila and parts of Rizal province looms as the water level at La Mesa Dam continues to drop with the onset of El Niño, a dry spell triggered by periodic warming in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

As of 4 p.m. on Sunday, water elevation at the dam had dropped to 68.93 meters, breaching the 69-meter critical low level.

It may further go down due to increased demand, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Pagasa hydrologist Richard Orendain said the water level at La Mesa Dam had fallen because there had been no significant rainfall since December in Novaliches, Quezon City, where the dam's watershed is located.

La Mesa, an earth dam, has an ideal water level of 80 meters.

Demand for water from consumers

in Metro Manila and surrounding areas has increased, partly due to the onset of El Niño, Orendain said. **(See related story in Metro, Page A12.)**

"As time goes on, and especially with increased temperatures, the demand really rises, compared to colder months," he said.

Manila Water Inc., which gets its

water supply from La Mesa Dam, has implemented pressure and supply reduction schemes, which resulted in service interruptions in parts of the metropolis.

Although La Mesa Dam elevation levels are critical, Angat Dam in Bulacan province, which supplies water to La Mesa, has a healthy

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# La Mesa Dam water breaches critical level

## FROM A1

level of 200.97 meters as of 6 a.m. on Sunday, according to Orendain.

Angat Dam's critical low level is pegged at 180 meters.

According to Manila Water, its customers in Metro Manila in 2018 required 1,650 MLD (million liters per day).

### Store water

Jeric Sevilla, Manila Water spokesperson, said the water concessionaire was "fine-tuning its operational adjustments."

"[The] objective [is to have] a window where people will have

water, and for them to store water for their needs," Sevilla said in a text message.

Orendain said water utilities should inform customers about service interruptions, which may continue, especially since the country was now feeling the effects of El Niño.

He said service interruptions were necessary for water utilities to try to extend supply until the onset of the rainy season.

Water at La Mesa Dam is expected to be replenished by the end of May or the first week of June, according to Pagasa.

The two concessionaires in Metro Manila—Manila Water and Maynilad Water Services

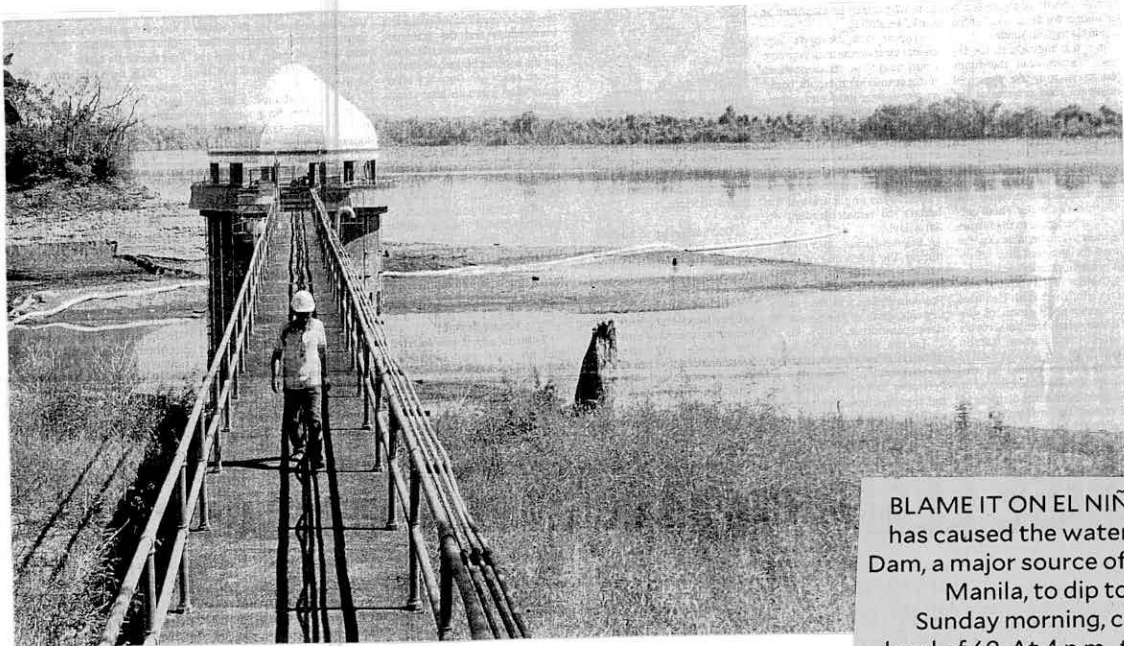
Inc.—rely on the water supply from Angat, Ipo and La Mesa dams. Water from Angat passes through Ipo where it is released to La Mesa.

Maynilad also draws from Laguna Lake water that it filters for distribution to customers in southern Metro Manila (Muntinlupa, Las Piñas and Parañaque cities, and parts of Cavite province).

Manila Water provides water supply to the east zone—Makati, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Pateros, San Juan, Taguig, Marikina, most parts of Quezon City, San Andres and Santa Ana in Manila—all in Metro Manila, as well as Angono, Antipolo,

Baras, Binangonan, Cainta, Cardona, Jalajala, Morong, Pililia, Rodriguez, San Mateo, Tanay, Taytay and Teresa—all in Rizal.

Maynilad supplies water to the west zone—all parts of Manila except for San Andres and Santa Ana, some parts of Quezon City (west of San Juan River, West Avenue, Edsa, Congressional and Mindanao avenues, the northern part of Quezon City starting from the districts of Holy Spirit and Batasan Hills), Makati (west of South Superhighway), Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon—all in Metro Manila. —WITH A REPORT FROM INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ



**BLAME IT ON EL NIÑO** The dry spell has caused the water level at La Mesa Dam, a major source of water for Metro Manila, to dip to 69.02 meters on Sunday morning, close to its critical level of 69. At 4 p.m., the level dropped to 68.93. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA



# BusinessMirror

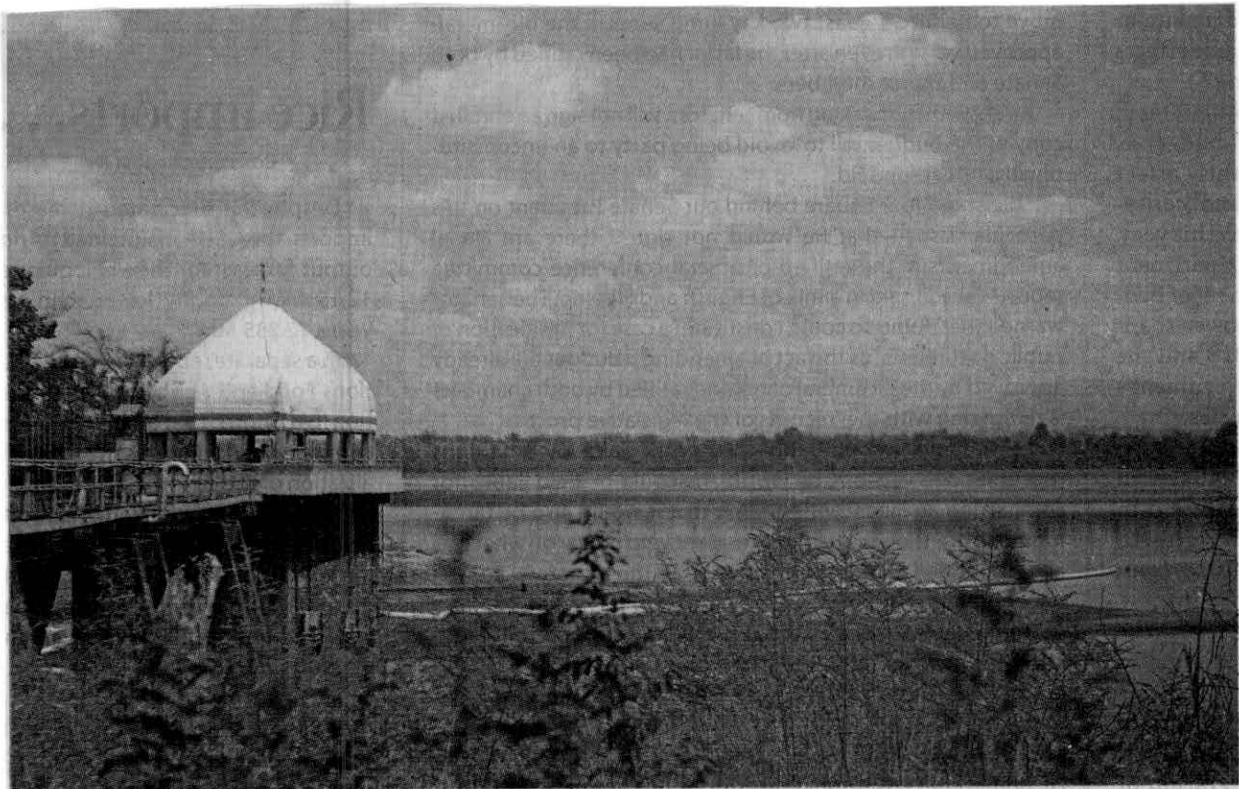
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**NEAR CRITICAL** The water level at La Mesa Dam reached its lowest in 12 years on Friday, and further neared the critical level of 69 meters on Sunday, in the latest sign of the hot spell's impact. The Sunday (March 10) water level as of 11 a.m. had reached 68.95 meters. *Story on A12.* NONIE REYES





# Water crisis threatening PHL–Poe

**A**SSERTING that "Right to Water and Sanitation" has been recognized by the United Nations, Sen. Grace Poe found it unfortunate that in the Philippines, "the right has yet to be fully enjoyed by our people."

In a statement issued on Sunday, the senator warned that the country is facing a looming water crisis, prodding the government to "be more proactive in addressing the problem by adopting a radical approach in tackling existing problems or shortcomings" in the water-supply system.

Citing the urgent need to find sustainable way to use this precious resource, Poe pointed out that "we are an agricultural country and that says a lot regarding the importance of water supply," adding that "we have provinces that have year-round sufficient water supply, enabling their farmers to plant and harvest year-

round, as well." She lamented that some provinces lack such water supply, making huge tracts of agricultural lands idle during lean months.

According to her, water supply and distribution are on top of the short list of natural monopolies, and it could be readily seen as the gauge of good governance or management.

"This is literally the lifeblood of an agricultural country like the Philippines," she added. "Enough attention and funding must be devoted to this, because this is what sustains our farms, and the livelihood of our farmers. This will ensure our food supply is adequate not just in some places, but in the entire country," Poe said in Filipino.

The senator suggested the need to "look into better technologies and infrastructure to harness all our natural water supplies."

"What for are we an archipelago

surrounded by bodies of water? We also need to capitalize on the fact that lots of typhoons that bring heavy rains frequently visit the country," the senator said, suggesting that, "We can hit two birds with one stone—prevent flooding and somehow redirect rainwater to arable agricultural lands or to treatment facilities, turning said water into home-friendly public utility for all our households. There should really be a meaningful discourse, planning and funding towards these types of projects to improve our water systems."

At the same time, Poe pointed to the many overlaps in the regulatory framework for water, with economic regulations provided under a number of different arrangements, thereby resulting in an unstable and fragmented regulatory framework.

She lamented that "this fragmentation has had significant implica-

tions" in the effective and adequate delivery of water and sanitation services in the country. "Because there is no lead agency in the water resource sector, the different coordination systems, functions and jurisdictions of the various agencies have made it impossible hard for water and sanitation to be collectively managed," she added. "Thus, the establishment of a unified agency that would focus on water, sewerage and sanitation is certainly very important."

She then justified her filing a bill to "create the Water Regulatory Commission and rationalize the economic, as well as administrative regulation of water utilities through an independent, quasi-judicial body." Among its functions are to set the policy for water supply, sewerage and septage management; issue licenses; set, review and approve rates; and other vital functions. **Butch Fernandez**



# Angat enough for MM needs

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## Water level at La Mesa critical

By Francis Earl Cueto

The water level at La Mesa Dam hit close to critical level early yesterday while that of Angat Dam stayed at normal level, conditions that may, sooner or later, affect customers of water utilities Maynilad and Manila Water and farmers needing irrigation in Luzon.

In a radio interview, National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Dr. Sevillo David Jr. said the water level in Angat Dam was at 200.97 meters Sunday — still 20

meters higher than the reservoir's minimum operating level of 180 meters.

The La Mesa Dam, meanwhile, fell to 69.02 meters, just 0.2 meters away from the critical level, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration or PAGASA.

"Right now, we see enough water supply at Angat to meet the needs of our countrymen in Metro Manila, along with the irrigation (for farms) in Bulacan and Pampanga, especially in the month of March or this dry season," David said in Filipino.

He expressed hope there would be enough water in the dams for the aforementioned needs before the rains come in May or June.

PAGASA hydrologist

Jason Bausa, in a separate interview, also said that the water level at La Mesa Dam is expected to go down to its critical level in the next six to eight hours Sunday.

Bausa said since most of the water consumers in Metro Manila get their supply from the Angat Dam, the low water level at La Mesa Dam would affect only a small number of consumers.

"The major water supply for Metro Manila comes from Angat, thus La Mesa's impact would not be too bad," he said in the vernacular of the dam located in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

## Hydrologist: The major water supply for Metro Manila comes from Angat, thus La Mesa's impact would not be too bad.

David said the NWRB is strictly monitoring the water level in Angat Dam for changes during the expected El Niño period.

Depending on the changes in the water level, he said the agency may cut down the water allocation given to the two Metro Manila concessionaires, namely the Manila Water and Maynilad.

"Come May, depending on the data, we will act correspondingly to minimize the effect to our people (of low water levels)... We may reduce allocation for irrigation and water supply," he added.

The water levels in other dams as of 6 a.m. Sunday also dropped due to the effects of the El Niño phenomenon: Ipo - 101.03 meters; Ambuklao - 749.18 meters; Binga - 573.21 meters; San Roque - 265.86 meters; Pantabangan - 205.21 meters; Magat - 170.32 meters; and Caliraya - 286.82 meters

Manila Water recently announced that some areas in the East Zone may experience "low pressure" to "no water" supply due to the implementation of its El Niño contingency plan which started last 6 March.

Maynilad, on the other hand, said that its expanded water storage capacity will be able to cover the water demands of its customers throughout the summer months.



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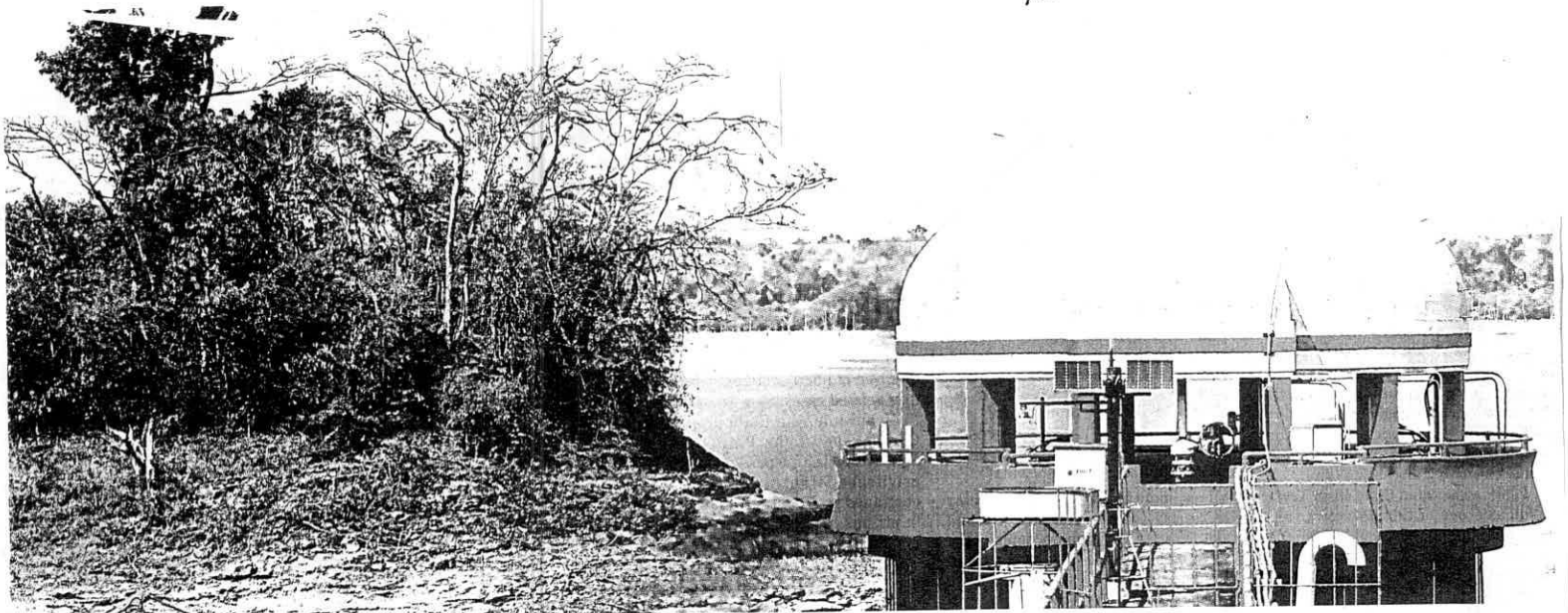
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LA Mesa Dam's supply has reached critical level, but it should have minimal effect on the supply of water in Metro Manila.

ANALY LABOR





**WATER IS LIFE** A firetruck provides Barangka Drive residents in Mandaluyong City their much needed water supply for the day. Service disruptions, as La Mesa Dam's water level turns critical, have become common in Metro Manila. —MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

# Dry taps spark outcry

**Outside-the-schedule disruptions also irk residents, small business owners**

By **Matthew Reysio-Cruz**  
@MatthewINQ

Water interruptions across Metro Manila have provoked an outpouring of anger and pleas for help from residents and small business owners whose daily routines have been disrupted by the prolonged shortage.

The flood of consternation came amid an announcement from Manila Water Co. Inc. on Sunday that the water interruptions would further extend to areas in Quezon City, Makati, Marikina, Pasig, Pateros, Taguig, Mandaluyong, San Juan and parts of Rizal province.

Some of the affected areas were scheduled to lose water for as long as 22 hours a day but many residents grumbled that their taps were still dry even during the promised two-hour respite.

Further heightening anxieties, Manila Water did not say

in its advisories until when the interruptions would last. Limited rainfall had caused water levels at La Mesa Dam, the source of the company's supply, to dip to critical levels in recent days.

### Alternate supply

Jesse Livingston, whose girlfriend owns a noodle house on popular food hub Maginhawa Street in Quezon City, told the Inquirer they had been forced to subsist on an alternate water source after their own supply was cut on Friday.

"She has needed to place buckets in the comfort room and wash station so guests can use the toilet," Livingston said. There are also 25-gallon containers stocked in the kitchen for washing the dishes.

"If she loses the alternate supply, then that's it," he added, saying a shop below them had already closed. "Five staffers go home with no wages

and the restaurant's financial footprint in the local community disappears."

Nicole Gonzales, owner of Soap Shack Laundromat in Mandaluyong City, said the water shortage had placed a strain on both her operations and sales since Friday.

"We had to lay off some employees and instruct them not to go to work anymore because we had to close earlier than usual," she said.

Reaj Evangelista, a resident of Barangay Barangka Drive, Mandaluyong City, said the disruptions had severely affected the routine in her house where she lived with her father, a stroke patient, and two young nephews.

"We save water as much as possible by eating on paper plates or ordering food outside," she told the Inquirer. They had to trek to a relative's house to wash clothes, and were heavily reliant on

firetrucks that pass by to provide extra water.

Barangka Drive is one of the villages that had been scheduled to receive water from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., but Evangelista said not "a single drop of water" had returned since Thursday.

### Gripes about advisories

Roselle de Ortega, a resident of Barangay San Luis in Antipolo, Rizal, had similar gripes about Manila Water being unable to provide proper advisories or follow the schedules it had stipulated.

The company said water at San Luis would be cut from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., but her taps had been dry since the night before, Ortega said.

In its Facebook page, Manila Water apologized to its customers for water interruptions outside of their announced schedules, saying it was due to the increase in demand. INQ



## MWSS repeats call to conserve water

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonlmayuga

**A**MID concern over water supply, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) reiterated its call to the public, particularly those living in Metro Manila, to use water wisely and support the government's effort to ensure ample water supply especially in the wake of a weak El Niño in the Tropical Pacific.

According to the country's weather bureau, the development has resulted in the upgrade of the Enso Alert System to El Niño Advisory. This year may be the warmest year on record as El Niño, according to some climate-change observers.

MWSS Administrator Reynaldo V. Velasco said he is calling on everyone to save water and help cushion water shortage as El Niño has varying impacts such as delayed onset of rainy season.

"Since we primarily source our water from the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system, we have to do our share to help lessen the effect of El Niño not only on our need for water in our households and industries but also on agriculture," Velasco said. As a rule, discharge for potable water supply becomes the priority during drought events, reducing water releases for agricultural ir-

rigation and power generation.

### Dam situation

**W**ATER from Angat passes through the Ipo Dam, where it is then released to the La Mesa Dam.

According to government weather forecasters, La Mesa Dam has a 47-cubic-meter-per-second allocation of water from Angat Dam, higher than the 44 cms the government normally earmarks for La Mesa Dam during the dry season.

The water level at La Mesa is recorded below normal level and has prompted calls for water conservation from concerned sectors to maintain water reserve availability. As of March 5, its reservoir water level is 69.47 meters, which is below its normal high water level of 80.15 meters.

The onset of the dry season and the increasing demand from the burgeoning population has contributed to the decline in water levels, according to Velasco. This does not mean, however, that a water shortage looms in the horizon for residents of Metro Manila and neighboring provinces unless there is a disregard for water conservation until the rainy months set in, he added.

### Rainfall

**T**HE rainfall for Angat watershed for March is forecast at 38.1 percent, way below normal and 68.8 percent,

below normal for April. Rainfall condition is way below normal if the percentage is less than or equal 40; below normal if it is 41 to 80; near normal if it is 81 to 120; and above normal if it is greater than 120.

Forecast rainfall for Metro Manila in percent of normal is 37.8 percent in March, way below normal, while April, May and June rainfall forecasts are below normal. The province of Bulacan, which hosts the Angat reservoir, also has a way below normal rainfall forecast at 32.1 percent in March. Except for southern Mindanao and Surigao del Sur where near normal is likely, most parts of the country is forecast to have way below to below normal rainfall conditions this month.

According to the Climate Outlook of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, average-to-slightly-warmer-than-average temperature will prevail during the March-to-August period. Six to nine tropical cyclones may develop and enter the Philippine area of responsibility but the frequency will be below average based on historical perspectives. The Pagasa also forecast meteorological dry spell to drought conditions in most areas in the country in the coming months.



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**Asia Water Council holds confab in Manila**

It's all systems go for the hosting of some 200 international delegates to the Asian Water Council (AWC) 8th Board of Council (BoC) Meeting, 3rd General Assembly and Elections from March 14-15, 2019, in Manila. This was disclosed by Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Reynaldo Velasco, a member of the AWC BoC headed by K Water President Lee Hak-soo. The event will be hosted by MWSS together with its concessionaires Manila Water Company, Inc., Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Luzon Clean Water Development Corp. "It is an honor for us to be hosting this event at a time when our government is vigorously undertaking the Build, Build, Build program that includes water infrastructure and the rehabilitation of Manila Bay," Velasco said. Asia Water Council boasts of over 100 organizations as members including the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank.



## Sagot ng Malakanyang sa tagtuyot

# WATER SAVING PROJECTS

**Mula sa pahina 1**  
Binabalak ng pamahalaan na atasan ang bawat komunidad na magkaroon ng sariling imbakan ng tubig at rainwater catchment basins.

Matagal nang hinihimok ng mga eksperto ang publiko para sa pag-iipon ng tubig sa panahon ng tag-ulan, na maaring magamit para sa mga kabahayan at maaring maipreserba sa panahon ng tag-init.

Kasabay nito ay umapela na rin ang Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) sa mga konsumer na gamitin nang tama at maayos ang

suplay ng tubig at makibahagi sa mga hakbang upang masiguro ang sapat na suplay nito.

Iniulat na patuloy ang pagbaba ng water level ng La Mesa dam na isa sa mga pangunahing pinagkukunan ng suplay ng tubig.

Samantala, ayon naman sa Pagasa, posibleng maitala pa ang mas mahaba at mas mainit na panahon na makaaapekto sa mahigit 30 probinsiya sa bansa.

Kaugnay nito ay tinanyak ni National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) spokesperson Edgar Posadas na

kontrolado pa rin ang epekto ng El Niño sa bansa.

Tiniyak ng NDRRMC na naagapan pa ang sitwasyon ngunit hindi pa rin sila nagpapakampante.

Marami umanong local government unit ang nagpasa ng kopya ng kanilang resolusyon para aksiyunan ang problemang dulot ng El Niño sa kanilang lugar.

Karamihan sa mga ito ay mula sa Mindanao at Mimaropa region.

Nagpaalala naman si Posadas sa mga LGU na maaari silang humiling ng kakailanganing pondo mula sa NDRRMC. **VERLIN RUIZ**

### LEBEL NG TUBIG SA ANGAT NORMAL PA

PATULOY na binabantayan ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam kung sakaling magbago ito sa El Niño period.

Sa kabila ito ng pangamba na bumaba na rin ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

Tiniyak ni NWRB Executive Director Dr. Seville David Jr. na ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay nasa 200.97 meters, mas mataas ng 20 meters sa minimum operating level ng reservoir na 180 meters.

Ang Angat Dam na nasa Norzagaray, Bulacan, ay ang main supplier ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

"Sa ngayon, sa tingin namin may sapat tayong supply ng tubig sa Angat para matugunan ang pangangailangan ng mga kababayan natin sa Metro Manila, kasama na rin 'yung irigasyon sa Bulacan at Pampanga, lalo na itong buwan ng Marso, or itong panahon ng tag-init," paniniguro ni David.

"Sana makarating 'yung panahon ng tag-ulan nitong mga buwan ng Mayo o Hunyo," dagdag pa niya. **NENET V**





## WAG KANG PIKON

JAKE MADERAZO

MAGSISIMULA sa unang linggo ng Abril ang “summer”, pero nagpatupad ngayon pa lang ang Manila Water at Maynilad ng “El Nino water contingency measures” sa kanilang 15 milyong customers dito sa Mega Manila.

Ang dahilan -- ang La Mesa Dam ay nasa critical level na at 60.16 meters, at pinupunan na lang ng Angat Dam (201 meters) na swerte na

mang mataas pa ang level.

Noong 2010, nagkaroon tayo ng “water rationing” sa Metro Manila nang bumagsak ang Angat dam water level sa 167.55 meters.

Sa ngayon, 95.6 porsyento ng tubig sa Metro Manila ay galing Angat Dam na umaasa naman sa mga bagyo at ulan na bumabagsak dito. Kayat kapag nag-El Nino at kukonti ang ulan sa

# Kaliwa-Laiban dam at Kanan dam: Solusyon sa tubig ng Mega Manila

bawat taon, hirap sa supply ng tubig.

Ang MWSS ay merong mga planong “Laiban-Kanan dam” sa Tanay Rizal at “Kaliwa dam” sa Infanta at General Nakar, Quezon sa ilalim ng kanilang “New Centennial Water Source Project” upang kumuha ng ibang water sources maliban sa Angat.

Katunayan, nai-award na sa China Energy Engineering Co. Ltd ang pagdisenyo at konstruksyon ng Kaliwa dam na 60-meters ang taas kasama ng isang 27.7

kilometer na “raw water conveyance tunnel”.

Ito’y magsu-suplay ng 2,400 milyon litro bawat araw at dadagdag sa kasalukuyang suplay na 4,132 milyon litro bawat araw mula Angat.

Ang halaga ng proyekto ay P18.72-bilyon kung saan P10.2-bilyon ay manggagaling sa “Official Development Assistance” ODA ng China.

Ang hinihintay na lamang ay ang “environmental clearance” mula kay Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu. Ang pangako ng MWSS, pagdating ng 2022 o tatlong taon mula ngayon ay maitatayo ang mga bagong dam na ito kung wala nang “delay” sa paper work at sa DENR.

Marami ang kumokontra tulad ng environmentalists, church groups at mga pamilyang mare-relocate dahil sa mga proyekto.

Isang watershed area na may lawak na 9,400 hectares ang ilulubog sa tubig, kasama ang 7 mountain barangays, kung saan apektado ang higit 6,000 families.

May nagsasabi rin na ito raw ay isang “Chinese

Debt trap” tulad ng sa Sri Lanka. Mga akusasyong titimbangin ng “political will” ng kasalukuyang administrasyon.

Meron ding “unsolicited proposal” ang MWSS mula sa grupo ni Quezon Rep. Danny Suarez na magtayo ng isang 400-megawatt Hydro-electric power project sa Kanan river. Kuryente ang negosyo nila kayat ang by-product nitong tubig, mga 3,000-M liters per day, ay ibibigay sa MWSS sa murang halaga.

Sa ngayon, meron nang 35.5 milyon ang residente ng Mega Manila at sa susunod na 10 taon, ito’y lalampas ng 40 milyon. Talagang dumadami na ang mga tao at ang panibagong pagkukunan ng tubig ay isang pambansang pryoridad.

Sa totoo lang, mataagal na tayong sinisingil ng MWSS para sa konstruksyon ng “drowning” pa lamang noon na “Laiban dam” at iyan ay nasa resibo mo hanggang ngayon. Noong 2011, ang binayaran natin sa water bills para konstruksyon ng Laiban dam ay nasa P11-B. Magkano kaya ito ngayon?

Sa aking palagay, dapat ay wala nang “delay” ang pagtatayo ng Kanan-Laiban dam at Kaliwa dam. Hihintayin pa ba nating magka-problema ang Angat Dam, una sa kakapusan ng tubig o sa trahedyang mangyayari kung mapinsala ito ng paggalaw ng “West Valley faultline”?



STRATEGIC  
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# Coal ban not law but 'strong policy'

## Youth groups press for ordinance to keep polluting power sources out

By **Orlando Gamilla Jr.**  
and **Hazel P. Villa**  
@inquirervisayas

BACOLOD CITY—A coalition of five youth groups in Negros Occidental expressed support for a decision to declare the province off limits to coal power plants and press for the passage of a measure that would give the declaration the force of law.

Youth for Climate Hope (Y4CH) said although Gov. Alfredo Marañon Jr.'s executive order declaring the province to be coal-free was not law, it was a "strong policy statement."

The governor's policy, the group said, could translate into stronger ordinances.

"This is only the beginning," said Krishna Ariola, 21, one of the leaders of Y4CH.

"We will continue to fight" until Marañon's executive order becomes an ordinance, she added.

### Weekly rallies

Y4CH has been protesting plans by Global Power Holdings Corp., the power arm of conglomerate San Miguel Corp., to install a 300-megawatt circulating fluidized bed coal-fired power plant at the villages of Palampas and Punaw in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

The group has been holding protest rallies outside the provincial capitol in Bacolod City every Wednesday since Feb. 13.

It timed the rallies for regular sessions of the provincial board to press the local law-making body to pass a law

against the construction of coal-fired power plants in Negros Occidental.

The group rejoiced when Marañon, who was serving his last term as governor, signed Executive Order No. 19-08 which declared that the province would continue to pursue clean and renewable energy projects and oppose the entry or establishment of any coal-fired power plant.

### Model province

Ariola said the province didn't have a single coal plant but has several sources of renewable energy such as solar plants in the cities of Cadiz, San Carlos and La Carlota.

"We aim to keep it that way," Ariola said.

"We can be a model province"

for renewable energy in the country, she said.

Ariola added, though, that such a dream could come true only if the government and the private sector invested in renewable energy technology and upgraded the province's power transmission lines.

### Investment

She also called on the youth in the province to support the call for clean sources of energy.

"We are all in this together. Let's not wait for the day when it becomes too late to act," Ariola said.

"While we're still here, and while we still can, we should use our voices, our skills and our intellect to demand justice for our communities," she added. INQ



**YOUTH SUPPORT** A coalition of youth organizations and environmental advocates in Negros Occidental assembles on March 6 at the provincial capitol to press for an ordinance to give a coal-free declaration the force of law. —CLAUDIA GANCAYCO/CONTRIBUTOR



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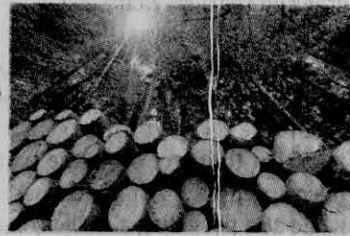
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## Changing the way we look at cutting trees

PRODUCERS Association (PWPA) aims to dispel these myths and in the process educate the public about the importance of sustainable forest management.

Sustainable forest management refers to environmental preservation and management that is sustainable, socially acceptable, and economically viable. It is the key to maximizing the benefits of tree cutting while keeping the negatives down to a minimum and helps ensure that the well-being of the environment is preserved for future generations.

Cutting down trees has always been viewed negatively by most people because of irresponsible logging, an issue that continues to worsen the problem of deforestation and magnify the effects of climate change. This in turn has led to an increasingly propagated negative public percep-



tion about cutting trees and the entire wood industry, a large part of which is anchored on misconceptions.

Aside from helping debunk logging misconceptions, the PWPA has also been working to institutionalize sustainable forest management to help address the growing need for wood and other by-products while ensuring ecological balance.

"Through sustainable forest management, people gain a better understanding of how to protect our forests," Charlie Liu, chairman of PWPA said. "



## HOW DOES METRO MANILA COMPARE TO OTHER MEGACITIES?

Megacities are urban centers with populations of over 10 million people. Estimates and projections of urban populations by the United Nations show that by 2035, the world is projected to have 48 megacities from 33 in 2018. In the Philippines, Metro Manila achieved megacity status in 2001 when it reached a population of 10.112 million people from just 1.544 million in 1950. Estimates for 2018 points to the metropolis housing 13.482 million people, ranking 17th out of 33 megacities for that year. By 2035, it is projected to reach 18.649 million people (17th out of 48 megacities). Most of the cities in Asia will see their respective population booms during that time span. One of the key exceptions is Tokyo whose population is projected to decline to 36.014 million by 2035 from 37.468 million in 2018.



Population of the largest urban agglomeration (top 20), in thousands

2018		2035	
Tokyo (Japan)	37,468	Delhi (India)	43,345
Delhi (India)	28,514	Tokyo (Japan)	36,014
Shanghai (China)	25,582	Shanghai (China)	34,341
São Paulo (Brazil)	21,650	Dhaka (Bangladesh)	31,234
Mexico City (Mexico)	21,581	Cairo (Egypt)	28,504
Cairo (Egypt)	20,076	Mumbai (Bombay) (India)	27,343
Mumbai (Bombay) (India)	19,980	Kinshasa (Dem. Rep. of the Congo)	26,682
Beijing (China)	19,618	Mexico City (Mexico)	25,415
Dhaka (Bangladesh)	19,578	Beijing (China)	25,366
Osaka (Japan)	19,281	São Paulo (Brazil)	24,490
New York-Newark (U.S.)	18,819	Lagos (Nigeria)	24,419
Karachi (Pakistan)	15,400	Karachi (Pakistan)	23,128
Buenos Aires (Argentina)	14,967	New York-Newark (U.S.)	20,817
Chongqing (China)	14,838	Chongqing (China)	20,531
Istanbul (Turkey)	14,751	Kolkata (Calcutta) (India)	19,564
Kolkata (Calcutta) (India)	14,681	Lahore (Pakistan)	19,117
Manila* (Philippines)	13,482	Manila* (Philippines)	18,649
Lagos (Nigeria)	13,463	Osaka (Japan)	18,346
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	13,293	Bangalore (India)	18,066
Tianjin (China)	13,215	Istanbul (Turkey)	17,986

NOTES: \*Refers to the National Capital Region

### PHILIPPINES (in thousands)

	2018	2035		2018	2035		2018	2035
Metro Manila	13,482	18,649	General Santos City	628	883	Santa Rosa	399	627
Davao City	1,745	2,499	Bacolod	592	827	Iloilo City	462	621
Cebu City	956	1,298	San Jose del Monte	593	803	General Trias	362	590
Antipolo	837	1,218	Imus	475	800	Cabuyao	348	547
Zamboanga City	894	1,217	Basilan City (City of Isabela)	502	748	Binan	364	543
Dasmariñas	710	1,032	Angeles City	468	746	Lipa City	363	540
Cagayan de Oro City	721	1,029	Calamba	495	733	Mandaue City	381	531
Bacoor	651	953	Lapu-Lapu City	444	656	Baguio City	361	499
						Butuan	353	490
						Tarlac	357	489
						San Pedro	345	486
						Iligan	354	479
						Batangas City	344	473
						Cotabato	316	443
						San Fernando	319	436

SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, POPULATION DIVISION (2018). WORLD URBANIZATION PROSPECTS: THE 2018 REVISION, ONLINE EDITION. (HTTPS://POPULATION.UN.ORG/WUP/DOWNLOAD/) BUSINESSWORLD RESEARCH: MARISSA MAE M. RAMOS BUSINESSWORLD GRAPHICS: BONG R. FORTIN





## Huwag magsiga at magsunog

**KAHIT** dito sa Kamaynilaan ay may nagsisiga upang makaluto ng pagkain. Ibig sabihin ay hindi lang sa mga lalawigan ito ginagawa.

Mayroon din namang nagsusunog ng mga "basura" tulad ng plastic, papel, mga tuyong dahon at sanga ng punongkahoy upang mawala raw ang kalat sa harap ng bahay nila.

Mayroon ding nagsisiga at nagsusunog ng mga nabanggit kong bagay bilang panluto.

Parehong pagsusunog at pagsisiga ang mga gawaing ito na labag sa batas o ang Republic Act 9003 o Ecological solid Waste Management.

Binigyang diin ng Bangon Kalikasan Movement (BKM) at Ecowaste Coalition (EC) ang pagsunod sa nasabing batas ngayong Fire Prevention Month.

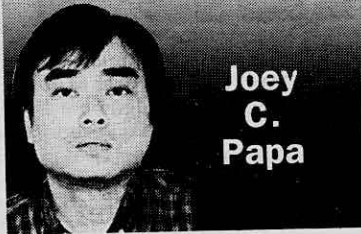
Hindi pa nga sumasapit ang buwan ng Marso ay panay na ang tunog ng sirena ng mga trak ng bumbero sa Kamaynilaan upang pumunta sa mga komunidad at apulain ang mga nasusunog na kabahayan.

At nang sumapit ang mismong buwan ng Marso, sa lunsod Quezon pa lang ay marami nang bahay sa mga barangay nito ang nasunog. Kalunos-lunos ang mga pangyayaring ito halos taon-taon.

May nagsasabing ang mga dahilan ng sunog ay depektibong kable ng kuryente, naiwang nakasinding kandila at ilang mga aksidenteng pangyayari tulad ng pagsisiga ng panlutong pagkain.

Sinabi na noon pa man ng Department of Health na masama sa kalusugan ang paglanghap ng mga nasusunog na kahoy, papel at plastic. Kawa-awa ang mga ina na halos araw-

### BANGON KALIKASAN



Joey  
C.  
Papa

araw ay nahihinga ang carbon mula sa sinusunog na kahoy, papel at plastic. Sa mga lalawigan, kadalasang gamit bilang panggatong ay kahoy, mga sanga ng puno o papel. Ngunit ang ilan sa mga lutuan sa probinsya ay nakahantad kaya kitang-kita ang usok mula sa lutuan at ang ihip ng hangin ay hindi lamang nakatuon sa taong nagluluto kundi maging sa mga kapitbahay.

Ngunit mapanganib ito sa kalusugan at buhay ayon sa EC at BKM. Ang pagsusunog, pagsisiga ay lumilkha ng furans at dioxins, mga nakalalasong kemikal na kapag nalanghap ng tao ay maaring magdulot ng malalang sakit tulad ng kanser sa baga. Ang ilan pang sakit ay ubo, sakit sa balat, mata, hika at iba pa.

Sabi nga ng isang kakilala kong tumigil na sa pagsisigarilyo, "kapag nahinga mo ang usok mula sa pagsisiga, para ka na ring naninigarilyo ng isang kahang sigarilyo. Masakit sa dibdib ang amoy ng nasusunog o nagsisiga."

Sa aming komunidad nga ay may ilan pa ring pasaway na tao. Ang problema ay ni hindi pa nga ito residente ng aming barangay. Mga mang-

gagawa mula sa iba't ibang lugar at sa isang compound malapit sa amin pinagpapahinga ng contractor at pinagpapahinga ang mga ito. Ngunit nagsisiga, nagluluto sa garahe na open space na garahe ang mga taong ito! Ang panggatong nila ay mga tirang kahoy sa mula sa isang construction site.

Masakit sa dibdib ang amoy ng usok na nililikha ng pagsisiga. Ang katabi ng garahe ay isang lumang bahay na gawa sa kahoy. Ang garahe ay nasa isang compound na may legal pang usapin tungkol sa pagmamay-ari. Ibig sabihin ay hindi pa malinaw kung may karapatang magpapahinga doon ang mga tauhan ng contractor.

Isang 98 taong gulang na retiradong nurse na babae ang nakatira sa lumang bahay. Dumadaing siya ang anak nito sa tuwing maaamoy ang usok-lasong polusyon. Walang pader na pagitan ang compound at lumang bahay. Isang "dura" lang ang layo ng mga ito.

Bawal ito ayon sa Ecowaste Coalition at Bangon Kalikasan Movement. Ipinagbabawal ito sa mga batas RA 9003, Clean Air Act at iba pang environmental laws.

Sana'y maaksyunan ang isyung ito ng QC Environment Department na itinawag ko na sa kanila noon pang nakaraang taon. Tila walang magawa ang pamunuan ng aming barangay. Kung hindi ito malulutas ng mga kinauukulan, gagamitin ko 'ika nga ang kapangyarihan ng pluma upang matigil ang ganitong masamang gawain laban sa mga tao at Inang Kalikasan. (bangonkalikasan@yahoo.com)