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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Govt to seed clouds to boost water in dams

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BY RENE ACOSTA

@reneacostaBM

THE government will conduct cloud-seeding operations in Regions 2 and 12 to counter the ill effects of El Niño, which a water concessionaire blamed for the water-supply interruption in the eastern part of Metro Manila.

National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council Executive Director Ricardo Jalad said the operations will be conducted by planes of the Philippine Air Force in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA) following the release of P18.3 million for the activity.

The cloud seeding, which will be carried out until March 21 to induce much-needed rain, was supposed to have been initiated on Thursday, according to Jalad, but the Air Force through its spokesman, Major Aristides Galang, said they could only commence the operation on Saturday or Sunday as the Nomad planes were still being prepared along with the equipment.

"So most probably, it is still tentative [if it's] on Saturday or Sunday, and then the initial area will be Cauayan, Isabela," Galang said, adding that the cloud seeding will be undertaken by the 900th Air Force Weather Group.

The cloud-seeding activities were agreed upon by the council in a meeting late Wednesday afternoon. The Department of Social Welfare and Development reported at the meeting it has allocated a standby fund of P11.8 million for family food packs as well as cash-for-work programs.

Jalad said that the agriculture department reported that El Niño has already resulted in production loss of P464.3 million and volume loss of P22.918 million in the agriculture sector as of March 8.

"[The] total area affected has reached 13,679 hectares, affecting 13,679 farmers in.... Regions 9, 10, 11, 12, Mimaropa and BARMM. DA conducted field validation to assess the damage and losses and continues to monitor standing crops in areas at risk," he said.

Several areas, including Zamboanga city, the province of Zamboanga Sibugay, Pagadian City and San Jose in Occidental Mindoro have already declared a state of calamity due to the effects of the El Niño-spawned drought.

Other measures

DURING the meeting, the council also discussed the prevailing problem of water supply that has already affected more than a million residents in the eastern part of Metro Manila, most of whom have been forced to line up for water rations, especially in the cities of Pasig and Mandaluyong.

Jalad said, however, that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources reported that Angat Dam, the main source of water for Metro Manila, is still within its normal operating level at 199.94 meters of elevation compared to its minimum operating level at 180 meters.

"The decline of La Mesa Dam, according to MWSS [Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System], is caused by the increase in water-treatment production of Manila Water. The water allocation of Manila Water from MWSS sourced from Angat Dam is 18.5 cubic meters per second [1600 million liters per day]," Jalad said.

"The water demand from Manila Water consumers, however, has increased to 20.25 cms [1750 million liters per day], forcing the latter to source the deficit from La

Mesa Dam," he added.

To remedy the problem, a technical working group which included the MWSS, National Irrigation Administration, the weather bureau Pagasa, Manila Water and the other concessionaire, Maynilad, has "committed to continue their close coordination to ensure that water-supply releases from the Angat Dam are optimized."

"Cross border gate opening shall be done in which 50 MLD [millions of liters per day] from Maynilad will be delivered to Manila Water. MWSS also presented its contingency plans, which include rotating water supply and pressure management, energization of Cardona Water Treatment plant on March 31, 2019, that can provide an additional 50 MLD," Jalad said.

Among others, the technical working group agreed to go for a "nonrevenue" water recovery, utilization of backwash from water-treatment plant and deployment of water tankers and mobile water-treatment plants "in which five units shall come from Manila Water and three standby units from Maynilad."

The MWSS would also activate its backup deep wells in case there would be need to augment the water supply.

"On this, hospitals with standby deep well will be the priority," Jalad said.

Also, the Department of the Interior and Local Government will issue a memorandum that will require local government units to enact ordinances that would curb illegal connections and encourage the prudent use of water.

The ordinances would allow water concessionaires and water utilities to conduct emergency repair of leaks.



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At Camp Crame, National Police chief Police General Oscar Albayalde has directed all police units in areas affected by the temporary water shortage in Metro Manila and Rizal to observe water-conservation measures in all camps and offices to help avert a possible water crisis in Luzon at the onset of the dry season.

PNP spokesman Police Colonel Bernard Banac said Albayalde ordered headquarters support units in camps and facilities affected to detail inspectors who will check on wasteful or unnecessary water usage.

"Local PNP units are directed to ensure safety and security of water-service providers against unruly crowd and persons who may want to provoke chaos in the water-distribution points," Albayalde's directive read.

'Black Friday'

BAYAN said it will stage a "Black Friday protest" against Manila Water and MWSS over what it said was Manila Water's "corporate greed" that has caused the current water crisis in Metro Manila.

"The claim that El Niño is to blame for the crisis has been exposed as a big fat lie. Manila Water has been expanding its customer base even if current facilities are unable to meet the growing demand. It is Manila Water's obligation to provide the needs of its customers. It has failed to do so," Bayan said in a statement.

"Manila Water earned a whopping P6.5 billion in 2018 and another P6.5 billion in 2017. It was even granted a rate hike of P6.50 per cubic meter spread over five years. It has expanded its operations overseas to include Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. Yet it has failed to provide the necessary facilities to meet the demands in its concession area in Metro Manila," it added.



La Mesa Dam water at its lowest

Cloud-seeding operations in Regions 2 and 12 begin

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**
and **FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD**

La Mesa Dam's water level is now down to 68.74 meters, its lowest in 21 years, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Thursday.

PAGASA hydrologist Sonia Serano said the new-low was recorded Thursday, breaching the 68.75 meters in 1998.

The lack of rainfall over the La Mesa watershed has contributed to the dwindling level of the water reservoir.

PAGASA had earlier said the rainfall received by the country could continue

to significantly drop due to a weak El Niño.

Water level at Angat Dam – which funnels water to Ipo Dam and then to La Mesa Dam – remains high at 199.63 meters as of Thursday. It is still above its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

To help mitigate the effects ► **13**

La Mesa Dam water... ◀1

of the El Niño, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said that cloud-seeding operations started Thursday in Regions 2 and 12.

Undersecretary Ricardo B. Jalad, Civil Defense administrator and NDRRMC executive director, said the cloud-seeding operations have been scheduled from March 14 to May 21, 2019, after conducting joint area assessments.

Jalad said ₱18.3 million has been released to the Department of Agriculture (DA) regional offices for the cloud-seeding operations in partnership with the Philippine Air Force (PAF).

With the impact of El Niño, the National Irrigation Administration has rationed the release of water from its irrigation facilities in South Cotabato province and the neighboring areas due to the dwindling supplies these past weeks.

Engineer Orlando Tibang, head of the South Cotabato Irrigation Management Office, said Thursday the water level in several communal and river irrigation systems (RIS) in the area already dropped by 50 percent to 70 percent due to the lack of rain and the intense dry weather.

He said it mainly affected the Marbel 1 and 2 RIS, Allah RIS, Banga RIS, and the communal irrigation systems

in Koronadal City and the municipalities of Tupi, Norala, and Lake Sebu.

"We're hoping that the dry spell will not extend to (a) few more months or we will really have a big problem here," Tibang said in a press briefing.

In the case of the Marbel 2 RIS, he said a significant portion of its 1,700-hectare service area has so far been affected by the decreasing water supply.

The irrigation facility, which covers portions of Koronadal City and Lutayan town in Sultan Kudarat, has only served some 729 hectares of farmlands, he said.

Tibang said the Marbel 1 RIS currently serves 1,355 hectares in parts of Koronadal City and Tandingan town but portions of the area have already suffered due to declining supplies.

The Banga RIS, which serves parts of Banga and Norala towns, currently supplies some 1,357 hectares but the water releases were rationed to only 50 percent of the service area, he said.

The Allah RIS Dam 1 has also experienced supply problems but has so far maintained its services to 5,388 hectares of farmlands in parts of Banga, Surallah and Sto. Niño towns, he said.

The official said its Dam 2, which

serves Sto. Niño and Norala towns, is currently closed due to periodic maintenance and will not reopen until May.

For the communal irrigation systems (CIS), he said the water levels have dropped to as low as 30 percent based on their latest monitoring.

Those severely affected were the CIS facilities in Sitio Supon, Barangay San Jose in Koronadal City, Barangay Tinago in Norala and in Lake Sebu town, he said.

If the dry spell, which is spawned by the El Niño phenomenon, would extend until June or July, Tibang said a significant portion of the area's irrigated farms would be severely affected.

Meanwhile, light rains are expected in Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Apayao, and Aurora due to the tail-end of cold front that will prevail over Northern and Central Luzon, PAGASA said.

Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Zambales will be partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated light rains.

Mindanao will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers due to localized thunderstorms. PAGASA warned the public of sudden heavy rains due to severe thunderstorms that may cause flash floods over low-lying areas. (With a report from PNA)



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La Mesa water level

drops to lowest in 21 years

The water level of the La Mesa Dam in Quezon City further declined and breached its lowest mark in 21 years yesterday, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration.

PAGASA hydrologist Sonia Serano said the La Mesa Dam water level was down from 68.79 meters the other day to 68.74 meters yesterday, the lowest water level of La Mesa Dam since its previous low 68.75 meters in 1998.

The lack of rainfall over the La Mesa watershed has contributed to the dwindling level of the water reservoir. PAGASA had earlier

said that the rainfall received by the country could continue to significantly drop due to a weak El Niño.

The 1997-1998 El Niño which was among the strongest events in history also led to water shortages in most parts of Metro Manila due to the low water elevation of Angat Dam.

As of yesterday, Angat Dam's water level remains high at 199.63 meters, which is still above its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

PAGASA said the tail-end of cold front will prevail over Northern and Central Luzon.

Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Apayao, and Aurora will have cloudy skies with light rains.

Partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated light rains may affect Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Zambales.

Mindanao will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers due to localized thunderstorms. PAGASA warned the public of sudden heavy rains due to severe thunderstorms that may cause flash floods over low-lying areas.

Meanwhile, the National Disas-

ter Risk Reduction and Management Council said yesterday that cloud seeding operations will be conducted in Regions 2 and 12 as part of efforts to help mitigate the effects of the mild El Niño phenomenon.

Office of Civil Defense Administrator and NDRRMC Executive Director Undersecretary Ricardo B. Jalad said the cloud seeding operation will be held from March 14 to May 21 after conducting joint area assessments.

Jalad said ₱18.3 million has been released to Department of Agriculture regional offices for cloud seeding operations in partnership

with the Philippine Air Force.

The other day, the NDRRMC Technical Management Group convened at the NDRRM Operations Center Conference Room in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City to discuss updates and action plans of pertinent agencies on El Niño.

Jalad assured the public that the government is doing everything to ensure adequate water supply for all. "These agencies present in today's meeting, especially those working with the water sector, will continue to collaborate to provide these needed services to the public," Jalad said. **(Ellalyn V. Ruiz and Francis Wakefield)**

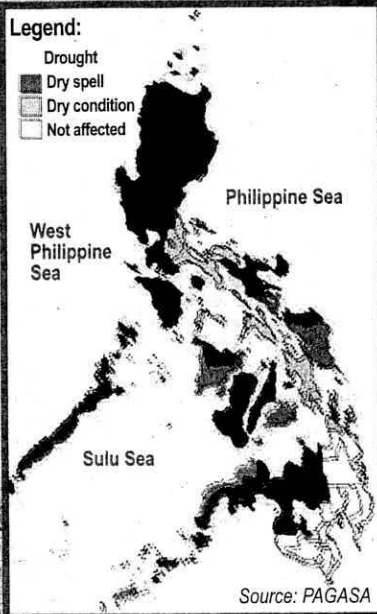


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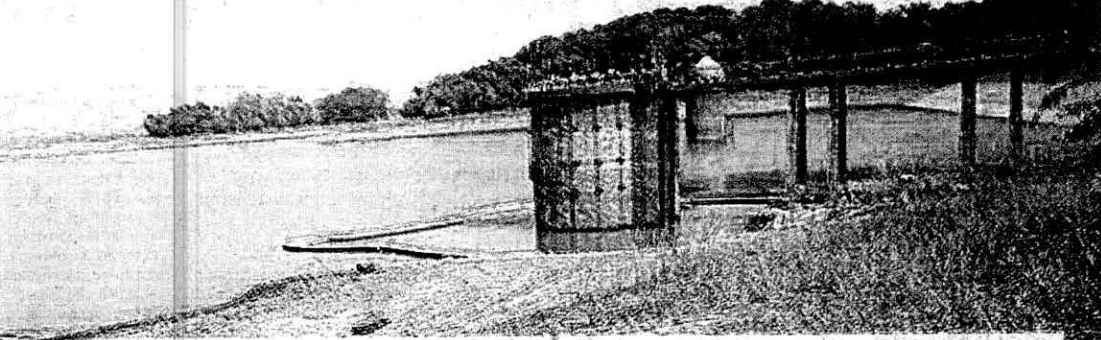
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EL NIÑO THREATENS 42 PROVINCES; LA MESA AT 21-YEAR LOW



By Rio N. Araja, Rey E. Requejo, Macon Ramos-Araneta and Vito Barcelo

THE weather bureau said Thursday that up to 33 provinces are expected to experience drought by the end of May, among the 42 that will go through a dry spell up to end-March owing to the El Niño phenomenon.

Ten provinces are immediately threatened by drought—Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Min-

doro, and Palawan in Luzon and Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Maguindanao and Sulu in Mindanao.

The water elevation at La Mesa Dam, meanwhile, breached its lowest mark in 21 years.

As of 2 p.m. Thursday, the dam's water level was at 68.74 meters from 68.79 meters.

Sonia Serraano, a weather bureau hydrologist, said the 68.74-meter elevation was at its lowest compared to 1998's 68.75 meters.

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LOWEST LEVEL. The El Niño phenomenon has breathed down on La Mesa Dam, built in 1929 and can hold up to 50.5 million cubic meters and occupying an area of 27 square kilometers in Quezon City, has gone down to its lowest level in 21 years at 68.74 meters as of Thursday—from 68.75 meters in 1998. **Manny Palmero**



El Niño...

From A1

The weather bureau said the reduced amount of rainfall due to a weak El Niño episode would continue to affect the reservoir's water supply.

Provinces that will experience a dry spell this month are Abra, Benguet, Kalinga, Apayao, Mountain Province, Pangasinan, Cagayan, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Metro Manila, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Quezon, Marinduque, Romblon, Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon in Luzon;

Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, and Samar (Western Samar) in Visayas; and Zamboanga del Norte, Misamis Occidental, Dinagat Islands, Surigao del Norte, and Tawi-Tawi in Mindanao, the weather bureau said.

A dry spell means three consecutive months of below normal rainfall conditions or two consecutive months of way below normal rainfall conditions, wherein average rainfall is reduced by more than 60 percent, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council executive director Ricardo Jalad explained in a press briefing.

By end-May, these provinces will experience drought: Pangasinan, Bataan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Metro Manila, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Quezon, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Romblon, Palawan, Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon in Luzon;

Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, and Samar (Western Samar) in Visayas; and Misamis Occidental, Dinagat Islands in Mindanao.

The El Niño phenomenon happens when water in the east equatorial Pacific gets warm while the water in the western Pacific stays cool, lowering the chances of rain, which can lead to dry spell and drought.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said people must brace for the possibility of a severe drought lasting until June.

It cited a decrease in the water elevation of Angat Dam at 199.63 meters, Binga Dam at 572.24 meters and San Roque Dam at 264.79 meters.

The water level at Ipo Dam, however, increased to 101.06 meters.

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage

System administrator Patrick Ty acknowledged it was the government's fault that parts of Metro Manila and Rizal province are now experiencing a water shortage.

In an interview with the ANC news channel, Ty said the government has yet to build two dams—Kaliwa and Liaban—to address the growing demand for water from Metro Manila residents because of opposition from indigenous people, squatters, leftist organizations and church groups.

"The Kaliwa Dam [and] Laiban Dam, had been proposed during Marcos's time. Due to a lot of opposition and accommodations for the IPs ...the project [kept] getting moved," he said.

The Kaliwa Dam in Quezon province, which can address Metro Manila's water needs for the next 20 years, was supposed to be built during the Aquino administration, but was again blocked by strong opposition, Ty said.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra on Thursday said consumers and businesses severely affected by the water interruption in Metro Manila and nearby areas may file civil cases against Ayala-owned Manila Water Company Inc.

Guevarra said damage suits may be initiated against the water supply concessionaire to over 6 million people in the east zone of the National Capital Region once the real cause of the water supply problem is established.

"If there is showing of fault or negligence on the part of Manila Water and if it is established that this crisis is caused not by natural causes of force majeure, then affected consumers may file damage suits individually," Guevarra said in an interview.

Guevarra made the statement as the Senate prepared for an investigation into the water crisis that begins March 19.

Manila Water, which services Metro Manila's east zone, has cut supply in several areas supposedly because the water level in La Mesa Dam, its emergency source, dropped due to the lack of rain and high demand.

But the service concessionaire for the west zone, Maynilad, has experienced no shortage.

Senator Juan Edgardo Angara on Thursday underscored the need for structural reforms in the water industry, noting that some 30 agencies are currently involved in water and sanitation policy,

among them the National Water Resources Board, the Local Water Utilities Administration and the MWSS. This setup, he said, is inefficient, with overlapping jurisdictions.

With Nat Mariano and Francisco Tuyay



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CLOUD SEEDING OPS SIMULA NA

TINALAKAY na sa pagpupulong ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office ang pagsasagawa ng cloud seeding operations.

Ito ay sa gitna ng epekto ng El Niño phenomenon kung saan lubhang apektado ang sektor ng agrikultura.

Sa pagpupulong na isinagawa kahapon, iniulat ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na dahil sa epekto ng El Niño ay umabot na sa P464.3 million ang production loss at P22.918

million ang volume loss sa agrikultura na naitala nitong Marso 8, 2019 dahil sa tagtuyot.

Batay sa report na inilabas ng DA, nasa 13,679 ektarya ng pananim at 13,679 magsasaka sa regions: 9, 10, 11, 12, Mimaropa (Mindoro-Marinduque-Romblon-Palawan), at Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, ang apektado ng kakulangan sa tubig.

Bunsod nito, ipinala-

bas na ng DA ang kabuuang P18.3 milyon sa kanilang mga regional office para sa cloud seeding operations sa tulong ng Philippine Air Force.

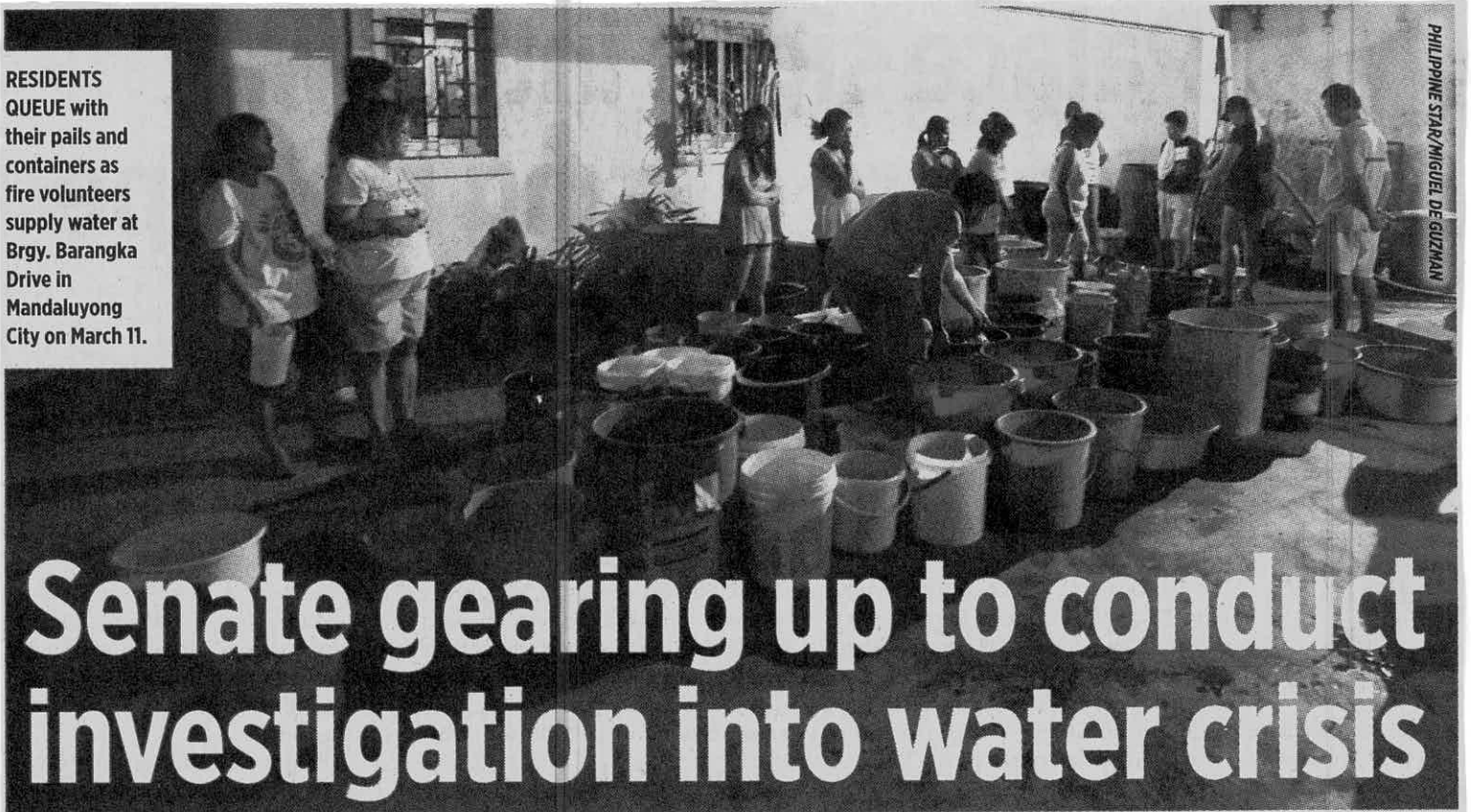
Matapos ang isinaga-

wang joint area assessment, inirekomendang isagawa ang cloud seeding operations sa Regions 2 at 12 mula kahapon, Marso 14 hanggang May 21, 2019.

BENEDICT A JR.



**RESIDENTS
QUEUE with
their pails and
containers as
fire volunteers
supply water at
Brgy. Barangka
Drive in
Mandaluyong
City on March 11.**



Senate gearing up to conduct investigation into water crisis

SENATE President Vicente C. Sotto III has filed a resolution calling for an investigation into Metro Manila's water crisis.

Mr. Sotto filed Senate Resolution 1028 on Wednesday ordering the Senate Committee on Public Services and other committees to look into the matter and come up with recommendations.

"If left unresolved, the water crisis may bring more serious problems to the people and businesses in the affected areas, and may impact the country as a whole," according to the resolution.

The crisis in Metro Manila's water supply stems from La Mesa

Dam, which Manila Water Inc. Co. reports is below the critical level of 69 meters at 68.74 meters. The La Mesa Dam is Manila Water's emergency water source.

Many areas in the metro have experienced weak to no water supply, with some areas having people line up for hours to get water from tankers.

The Committee on Public Services, Chaired by Senator Grace Poe-Llamanzares, has scheduled hearings for March 19.

In a statement on Thursday, Ms. Poe said that the probe will, in part, seek to resolve the matter of the low water levels in La Mesa Reservoir in Quezon City, despite

normal water levels at Angat Dam in Bulacan, which is the ultimate source of most of Metro Manila's water.

"*May tubig pa ang Angat Dam kaya nga ang western part na sineserbisyuhan ng Maynilad ay may tubig pa. Ang problema 'yung conveyance kung saan dadaloy ang tubig* (There is still water in Angat Dam which is why the Western part that is being served by Maynilad Water Services Inc. still has water. The problem is in how the water gets to Metro Manila,") she said.

The committee invited Manila Water Chief Operating Officer Geodino V. Carpio and Commu-

nications Head Nestor Jeric T. Sevilla Jr. and Maynilad Water Services Chief Operating Officer Randolph T. Estrellado.

Also invited were Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol; Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu; the weather bureau administrator Vicente Malano; Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) administrator Jeci A. Lapus; National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Seville D. David Jr.; Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Reynaldo V. Velasco and its Chief of Regulation Patrick N. Ty. — **Gillian M. Cortez**



Trusted Since 1930

The Manila Times

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Strategic Communication Initiatives Service

Water probe under way – Palace

MALACANANG on Thursday said the government has started investigating the water shortage, which might be "artificial."

Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo

said if reports were true that there is adequate supply from Angat Dam, the water woes might have been triggered by inefficiency and mismanagement

►ProbeA2

■ PROBE FROM A1

Water probe under way – Palace

in water distribution.

"We are investigating to know exactly what is happening or what's the cause of the lack of water supply," Panelo told reporters.

"Kung totoo na ang Angat Dam is punong-puno at lahat naman nanggagaling doon, oh di hindi nga totoo (If Angat Dam is full then (the water shortage) might not be true). So something is wrong with the efficiency in distributing as well as the quotas or the shares," he added.

Panelo wondered why Maynilad was not having the same problems as Manila Water.

"Eh 'di artificial lang iyon, kung ganoon (So it's only an artificial shortage). Because if the source is full, and another concessionaire is also full. Eh bakit naman iyong isa hindi. (Why is the other one not having problems?)," he added.

The Palace official said the government would hold accountable those involved for mismanagement.

"As soon as we have the findings we will know. Investigation is under way," he said.

"What is being done to ease the difficulties being experienced by ordinary people who do not have water tanks or other sources of water?" Enrile asked in Filipino.

He raised these issues at the sidelines of his campaign sorties in Antipolo, Rizal, where he was deluged with complaints from residents affected by the water shortage.

Antipolo is part of Manila Water's concession area.

Senate President Vicente Sotto 3rd on Wednesday filed Resolution 1028 directing the Senate Committee on Public Services, chaired by Sen. Grace Poe, to conduct an investigation on the current water crisis in Metro Manila and nearby areas.

He noted that the "low to zero water supply" was due to the operational adjustments being done by water service concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad.

While some attributed the crisis to the El Niño phenomenon, others blamed the water service concessionaires, "hence the need to review the concession agreements with them," Sotto said.

Seek other sources

Former Senate president Juan Ponce Enrile echoed Panelo's query and urged the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) to seek more water sources for the growing population in Metro Manila.

"Ngayon na ramdam na ramdam na natin ang El Niño at dapat naghahanda na rin tayo sa mga posibleng epekto ng climate change, hindi na dapat tayo umaasa sa iisang suplay ng tubig lamang (Now that we are feeling the effects of El Niño and while we are preparing for the effects of climate change, we should no longer be dependent on one source of water)," he said.

Enrile, who is seeking a fifth term in the Senate, raised the need to investigate the water shortage. The House of Representatives and Senate are set to conduct an inquiry into the water crisis on March 18 and 19, respectively.

"Bakit sa concession area lamang ng Manila Water ang krisis? (Why is it that the crisis is being felt only in the concession area of Manila Water?)" he asked.

"If left unresolved, the water crisis may bring more serious problems to the people and businesses in the affected areas, and may impact the country as a whole," he added.

Poe blamed concessionaires for the water shortage and vowed to dig deeper into the problem when the Senate starts its probe.

"Hindi ba responsibilidad ng mga concessionaires na masiguro na meron tayong sapat na supply ng tubig? Bakit parang isang linggo lang ang nakakalipas okay tayo pero paggising natin biglang wala ng tubig? Pwede bang hindi nila nakita ang problema na yan? (Concessionaires have the responsibility to ensure that we have ample supply of water. Last week we were okay then suddenly our taps ran dry. Why didn't they see this problem?)" the senator said.

She said executives of Maynilad and Manila Water would be invited to attend the inquiry so that they can explain and present solutions to the water problem.

**CATHERINE S. VALENTE,
BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO**



'KRISIS' SA SUPPLY NG MANILA WATER ARTIPISYAL — PALASYO

ni ROSE NOVENARIO

NAGHIHINALA ang Palasyo na artipisyal ang nararanasang kakapusan ng supply ng tubig ng mga kliyente ng Manila Water sa ilang bahagi ng Metro Manila, Rizal at Cavite.

Sa press briefing sa Palasyo, sinabi ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo dapat imbestigahan ang pangyayaring ito.

Nakapagtataka aniya na may supply ng tubig ang Maynilad habang ang Manila Water ay walang maisuplay gayong parehong sa Angat Dam ang kanilang source.

Ayon kay Panelo, sa chat group ng cabinet members ay sinabi ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na sinasabing puno naman ng tubig ang Angat Dam.

"Iyon nga ang sinasabi ni — parang iyon ang gist noong sinasabi ni Secretary Lorenzana e doon sa kaniyang chat na the water comes from Angat Dam and there is no shortage doon; as far as that particular dam is concerned - puno, walang kulang, so bakit nagkakulang iyong distribution. So gaya ng sinabi ninyo kanina, kulang iyong ibinigay na allocation dito sa parte ng Maynila. E iyon siguro ang alamin natin bakit nagkaganoon," aniya.

Nangangahulugan aniya na posibleng may mismanagement at problema sa distribusyon ng tubig ang Manila Water.

"E kung totoo na ang Angat Dam is punong-

puno at lahat naman nanggagaling doon, o 'di hindi nga totoo. So something is wrong with the efficiency in distributing as well as the quotas or the shares," dagdag ni Panelo.

KALIWA DAM PROJECT MABUBULILYASO KAPAG MARAMING TUMUTOL

MAAARING hindi matuloy ang kontrolersiyal na China-funded Kaliwa Dam project kung may mga pagtutol ang mga residente, environmental groups at simbahang Katolika.

Ang pahayag ay ginawa ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo isang araw matapos ilako ni Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez na ang Kaliwa Dam project ang tugon sa nararanasang krisis sa tubig ng mga kliyente ng Manila Water sa ilang bahagi ng Metro Manila, Rizal at Cavite.

"Well, if it affects the entire community, I don't think itutuloy iyon," ani Panelo hinggil Kaliwa Dam project.

Napaulat na ang pagtutol ng iba't ibang grupo sa konstruksyon ng Kaliwa Dam project ay dahil labag ito sa batas;

mapanganib dahil itatayo sa sona ng Philippine Fault Zone at Valley Fault System, isa itong "debt trap," puwedeng magiging sanhi nang pagbaha sa watershed mula Infanta hanggang Tanay, Rizal; at binabalewala ang epekto ng climate change.

Kabilang sa mga grupong matindi ang pagkontra sa proyekto ay Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), Alyansa Laban sa Kaliwa Dam, Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance, Purisima, Task Force Sierra Madre at Tribal Center for Development.

Naniniwala si Panelo na mas mabuting magtayo ng reservoir ang bawat siyudad at lalawigan para pagkuhaan ng supply ng tubig.

(ROSE NOVENARIO)

Sagot sa water crisis TUBIG SA SWIMMING POOL NG MGA HOTEL TIPIRIN CAR WASH LIMITAHAN

HINDI biro ang dinaranas na water crisis ngayon ng ilang lugar sa Metro Manila kaya't kumilos na rin si Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada upang makatulong.

Kahapon ay inatasan ni Estrada ang mga empleyado ng city hall na magtipid sa tubig at tiyaking nasa maayos na kondisyon ang mga gripo

sa lahat ng pasilidad ng lokal na pamahalaan.

Partikular na pinakilos ni Estrada sa City Administrator Atty. Ericson Alcovendaz upang magtalaga ng mga inspector sa mga banyo ng city hall at parke na nasa pamamahala ng lungsod para siguraduhing walang nasasayang na tubig.

Maging ang mga hotel at car wash business ay pinakiusapan ni Estrada na maging masinop sa tubig dahil chain reaction ang nangyayari ngayon sa kakulangan sa supply ng tubig.

Paliwanag ni Estrada maaring magtakda ng quota ang mga car wash business upang hindi masyadong maraming tubig ang nasasayang.

Gayondin ang mga hotel na huwag munang magpalit ng tubig sa swimming poolkung hindi kinakailangan.

Pinaghahanda rin ng alkalde ang mga bombero sa posibleng pagrarasyon ng tubig sa mga komunidad na mahigpit ang pangangailangan.

"Hatiran natin ng tubig lalo na ang mga komunidad na maraming sanggol at mga senior citizens dahil kailangan talaga ang tubig," dagdag ni Estrada.

Pinatitiyak din ni Estrada na sapat ang supply ng tubig sa mga ospital sa lungsod upang hindi masakripisyo ang pangangailangan ng mga pasyente.

SENATE READY FOR INVESTIGATION

WATER SHORTAGE HITS METRO CEBU, TOO

By Dale Israel
@inquirervisayas

Metro Cebu, like large swaths of Metro Manila, is facing a water shortage even before the dry season has been officially declared.

Water rationing has been implemented in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue, Talisay and Lapu-Lapu and the towns of Consolacion, Liloan, Compostela and Cordova because of low supply.

The Senate may have to include Metro Cebu in its investigation of the water shortage in Metro Manila that has sent temperatures rising and households reeling, as the problem continues with no apparent end in sight.

Sen. Grace Poe, who chairs the public services committee, is scheduled to hold a hearing on the issue on Tuesday next week.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III also filed a resolution calling for an inquiry.

The water levels at two major dams that supply water to Metro Cebu have receded, forcing a water district here to impose rotating service interruptions.

Water production at Buhisan Dam had dropped from 5,000 cubic meters per



DRYING UP Alexander Tangaja, his partner Dayanalez Dacayana and their 3-year-old child Angel had to walk for 20 minutes from their house to draw water from the almost dry river of Sitio Paylan in Cebu's City Barangay Bonbon. —JUNIE MENDOZA

day to 1,500 cu. m. per day as of March 13 due to the dry spell, said Charmaine Rodriguez-Kara, Metro Cebu Water District (MCWD) spokesperson.

The same thing happened at Jaclupan Dam where water production went down from 33,000 cu. m. per day to less than 27,000 cu. m.

Kara said the water district had no choice but to impose rotating supply interruptions in its service area.

The MCWD supplies water

to 183,000 service connections in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue, Talisay and Lapu-Lapu and the towns of Consolacion, Liloan, Compostela and Cordova.

As of March 14, water interruption was experienced in elevated areas, mostly those that received water from Buhisan Dam.

These included portions of Barangay Banawa and Horseshoe Drive in Barangay Guadalupe; Barangays Capitol Site, Kamputhaw, Sambag 1

and Sambag 2 as well as on F. Ramos Street in Barangay Cogon, B. Rodriguez Street; Juana Osmeña Street, the pier area, North Reclamation Area, MJ Cuenco Avenue and M. Velez Street.

Downtown Cebu City

Also affected by the service interruptions were downtown Cebu City and elevated areas in Talisay City, which get their water from Jaclupan Dam.

No water rationing was implemented by MCWD in Mandaue and other northern areas covered by MCWD, but residents had complained about low or no water supply at certain hours of the day.

Because the two dams are not producing water at full capacity, MCWD has to rely on groundwater, which accounts for 74,000 cu. m. of the 238,000 cu. m. of the water district's total daily production, according to Kara.

City Agriculturist Apple Tribunalo said 70 percent of the water sources in the mountain barangays of Cebu City had been depleted.

Residents and farmers in upland villages have been forced to go down to the lowlands just to get water.

Poe said the sudden shortage in supply from Manila Water had baffled her. She wanted to get to the bottom of the problem and to know what could be done immediately to address it.

"Manila Water has a lot to explain about this crisis. Three weeks ago, they did not issue any advisory and we did not feel that there would be a shortage. Then all of a sudden, you would wake up and there's no more water?" she said in a statement.

She noted that the water level at Angat Dam, which supplies more than 90 percent of Metro Manila, was normal.

Manila Water cited the dry spell and the dwindling supply at La Mesa Dam for the shortage.

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo is not discounting the possibility that the water shortage in parts of Metro Manila is "artificial" and caused by inefficiency and mismanagement.

Panelo said this angle would be investigated as the government looked into the service interruptions suffered by customers of Manila Water.

—WITH REPORTS FROM LEILA B. SALAVERRIA, JULIE M. AURELIO AND JEANNETTE I. ANDRADE INQ



Razon offers to build Wawa Dam as new source for Metro water

Tycoon Enrique Razon is pushing to build a new dam east of the capital to prevent another water shortage hitting thousands of people in Metro Manila as the dry season begins.

Wawa Dam in Rizal province can be the nearest major source of bulk water and provide 80 million liters per day by 2021 and 540 million liters daily by 2024, Razon said in a mobile-phone message. The billionaire said his group can start building the dam by the end of 2019 after signing a supply agreement with Manila Water Co., Inc. and securing environment and other permits.

"Our water project is obviously badly needed," Razon said. "But it's not an immediate fix and is for the medium-to-long-term or this will be a recurring problem." The water regulator supports the project, Razon said. President Rodrigo Duterte has tapped \$211 million in Chinese loans for a dam south of Manila as another water source.

Residents in the Philippine capital have been queuing for water rations for more than a week, armed with pails and basins while fire trucks are deployed to provide water to hospitals and schools. Some people who live in condominiums have resorted to fetching water from swimming pools, according to Twitter posts. More than 50,000 households

are affected, said Manila Water, which services half the capital region that's suffering from water shortage.

Manila Water, controlled by Ayala Corp., is seeking to tap 32 million liters a day from Maynilad Water Services, Inc., which supplies the other half of the capital, to help address a daily shortage of 140 million liters, Chief Operating Officer Geodino Carpio said at a briefing on Tuesday. It's also rushing to partially operate soon a delayed water treatment plant to add 50 million liters a day and have more deep wells.



ENRIQUE RAZON

Manila Water said the shortage was caused by rising demand aggravated by the start of the dry season and its delayed treatment plant. Maynilad Water gets more supply from the main source which is Angat Dam and has a new treatment facility, Carpio said.

Maynilad is also looking for new water sources to sustain adequate supply, Chairman Manuel Pangilinan said. Maynilad is willing to share its water supply with Manila Water to address the current shortage, Pangilinan said. (Bloomberg)



It gets worse

Let us get a few facts out of the way so we can understand the situation better.

First, Manila Water fumbled the handling of this water crisis. They should have rationed earlier and not depleted La Mesa Dam. They should have warned the public earlier and not just surprised everyone.

Secondly, government is principally to blame because it dragged its feet in getting supply augmentation projects going.

The original intention was for the private concessionaires to also be responsible for developing new raw water sources. But P-Noy's MWSS and NEDA insisted only government can do such projects. Of course, government delivered nothing in the end.

DEMAND AND SUPPLY



BOO CHANCO

Towards the end of the Aquino term, they relented and pre-qualified bidders to do Kaliwa on a PPP BLT basis. The Duterte administration changed mode and made it China funded, but it has not broken ground.

Thirdly, it will be a long, hot, and dry summer for us this year and the next three years or so, even if they

break ground on the Kaliwa project this year... if we are so lucky.

The plain truth is we have exhausted existing water supply sources for Mega Manila. Both Manila Water and Maynilad are expanding their customer base within their service areas, but are not getting significant new sources of water.

Now it is absolute crunch time. The rainy season is not expected until June, according to weather forecasters. Until then, there is little that can be done other than to ration the supply we still have.

Water demand will go up as the weather heats up, but both concessionaires are already running at near peak levels. As we can see now with Manila Water, their ability to meet elevated demand is a challenge.

A massive information campaign urging people to conserve water is necessary. Water conservation must become a personal habit for all of us.

We should require new hotels, condominiums, malls and office buildings in the Mega Manila area to include rainwater harvesting and a second piping system to use recycled grey water for flushing toilets and watering gardens. They are required to have STPs anyway that produces the grey water usually just discharged into the rivers.

Current buildings must be required to retrofit to include such water saving features (second piping system for grey water to flush toilets) that are actually already standard in many places in the region like Singapore and Hong Kong. I saw a notice that SM's Podium Mall is already doing this and saving many million liters of water daily.

Everyone must learn from what Bobby Ongpin is doing in Balesin Island Resort.

Balesin has no fresh ground water, so they collect rainwater. The runway of the airport has water catchment canals running all along the perimeter that channel the rainwater runoff to storage lagoons.

They are always expanding their water collection system. Every roof of every structure has its own rainwater collection system. Every drop of water is valuable to them.

They now have a total storage capacity of 130,000 cubic meters in five storage ponds. Even in the height of summer, they still have 68,000 cubic meters of water. With an average consumption of 400 cubic meters a day, this is good for half a year without a single drop of rain.

Used water is processed in modular sewage treatment plants, producing Class A grey water, used for the island's lush landscaping during the summer months. Balesin has zero sewage discharge, thanks to their investment in a state-of-the-art central sewage treatment plant.

The island is now self-sufficient in water without having to use a desalination facility that is on standby.

I lay the blame for today's miseries on government, past and present. The past governments simply didn't have the political will to develop the Kaliwa river for our additional water supply.

Kaliwa Dam will provide a redundant source of water to Angat. It has been studied and re-studied since the 1980s. An unsolicited proposal to develop it at no cost to government was made by San Miguel, but was rejected by Maynilad and Manila Water and by NEDA.

Gerry Esquivel, past MWSS administrator, told me "I really did not understand why after decades of study it has never been started."

Gerry said he tried to get it started and reached as far as prequalifying bidders for a PPP. But it was very frustrating, Gerry said.

"*Ang hirap pala.* You need to engage with indigenous people and their sovereign right to ancestral domain. You need to get clearances from the provinces and get provincial and regional endorsements. You need to discuss the effects of downstream to the very last affected barangay.

"You need to be mindful of this project's effect on tariff. You need to get TWG (technical working groups) approvals from everyone. NEDA should endorse the project. You need the buy-in of practically all departments. You need full hydraulics and engineering, tunnel experts and dam specialists from reputable transaction advisers and consultants. The list is endless."

The reality is, the Sierra Madre mountains are the last source of bulk water in Luzon with an estimated 8 billion liters per day capacity provided by Kaliwa, Kanan, Labuan and other tributaries.

Alan Ortiz, a public utilities expert, points out that we are today throwing ALL 8 billion liters of water per day from the Sierra Madre mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

"This is a criminal sin of omission by government in failing to harness these water sources not just for the Metropolis, but also for the surrounding Calabarzon provinces as well.

"Only the smallest of these water sources is scheduled for Build Build - Kaliwa at 550 million liters per day.

"New sources are key to long term sustainability of the concessionaires and water security of the metro, coupled with other demand-side interventions, such as mandating use of more efficient water appliances and possibly seasonal pricing to reflect scarcity value during drier days (I understand this is being studied by NWRB)."

Sadly, it will take three to four years for new sources to start supplying water. But government is still just on talking mode.

If nothing is done, our economy will be crippled and most of us may not even be able to take a bath or flush toilets.

We are getting a preview of that horrible future now.

Boo Chanco's e-mail address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter @boochanco



TITLE:

CTALK
CITO BELTRAN

To agree is to admit

Dear Manila Water,

Thanks to your inability to properly explain our current water crisis, I am reminded of the song by Billy Joel concerning "Honesty", particularly the following lines:

"If you look for truthfulness/You might just as well be blind/It always seems to be so hard to give/

Honesty is such a lonely word/Everyone is so untrue/Honesty is hardly ever heard/And mostly what I need from you"

Yes, Honesty second to water is what we mostly need and not your convoluted explanations about El Niño and La Mesa Dam going dry. Aside from your lack of honesty and serious failure to fulfill your contractual obligation to provide us water, your explanations are insulting to our intelligence. Your claims about the weather and the dam do not hold water because in complete contrast to your failure, your counterpart in the west zone Maynilad has continued serving their customers, and adding insult to your injury they are now bailing you out by giving you water.

I do admire your tenacity for sticking to your official line and blaming mother nature, but unfortunately for you, there are government officials who also resent your blame throwing given the fact that Manila Water and Maynilad Water both draw from the same "tap" or source; the Angat dam which as of yesterday was substantially full of water.

Sources from MWSS and the National Water Resource Board have opined that the reason Manila Water has gone dry is because the company failed to invest or complete much needed infrastructures and reservoirs, and has resorted to blaming the government for not providing or allowing them to develop alternative sources.

Ironic that the company who can't even complete the sewage treatment plants and water treatment plants that are part of their contracts is now acting as if they were capable of building dams and reservoirs! You people can't even stick to your notices of water interruption or commitments to keep schools and hospitals fully stocked with water so much so that our children might end up practically "home schooled" for lack of water, while patients get worse in hospitals that are inadequately cleaned or sanitized due to lack of water.

Your public apologies and call for water conservation are simply too little – too late especially for many businesses that have to cut down their days of operation due to lack of water and sadly have to pay the full price of rent and having employees.

While we are still adjusting to this crisis that has thrown all of us back into Third World status, Manila Water's epic failure has also cursed condominium dwellers and developers alike. People are now considering temporarily moving out of their condos and find short-term rentals until the water situation improves.

With showers now a "No Go" in almost all condos in the east zone of Metro Manila, what are the chances that condominium sales will soon take a hit due to such an unpleasant realization. It's bad enough to be in constant fear of the "fault line" and the big earthquake, but when you can't even stock enough water because you live high up, why would people want to buy a condo in the near future.

* * *

Email: utalk2ctalk@gmail.com





HINDI na biro-biro ang krisis sa suplay ng tubig.

Hindi lang ang Metro Manila ang may problema kundi ang iba pa.

Dapat na magkatuwang ang pamahalaan, mamamayan at pribadong sektor sa pagresolba sa krisis.

WALANG KRISIS

Kung pakikilingan ang mga konsesyonaryo ng tubig sa Metro Manila at kalapit na mga lugar, wala pang krisis.

Hindi nagsasabi ang Maynilad at Manila Water na kulang na kulang na ang kanilang tubig kaya wala nang suplay ang ibang lugar sa Metro Manila.

Ang malinaw lang, mga Bro, sinasabi nilang mahina ang suplay at kahit nilalagyan nila ng pressure o panulak ang tubig nila papunta sa kanilang mga kostumer, tanging ang mga matataas na lugar lang ang kakapusan o mawawalan ng tubig.

Pero anoman ang paliwanag ng dalawang konsesyonaryo, hindi maganda ang nagaganap sa maraming lugar, gaya ng Mandaluyong City na nawalan na halos ng suplay sa nakaraang ilang araw.

ILANG EPEKTO

Kabilang sa mga pinakasensitibo na lugar ang mga ospital.

Kapag walang tubig ang isang ospital, naririyang ang mga hawahan ng sakit ng mga may sakit at walang sakit.

Walang panlinis sa mga instrumento sa panggagamot at panlinis sa mga palikuran at buong kapaligiran.

Sa mga kasong operasyon, tubig ang kailangan na panlinis ng katawan ng mga doktor at kanilang mga instrumento.

Sa halip na gagaling ang inooperahan, maiimpeksyon ito dahil sa kawalang-kalinisan sa mga doktor, instrumento at kwarto.

Ang mga baby, kailangan ang mga kamay at katawan na malilinis na kakalong-kalong at mag-eestima sa kanila.

Kawawa ang baby na magkakasakit dahil lang sa dumi ng mga nars, doktor at ina na nag-aasikaso sa kanila.

ESKWELAHAN

Kabilang din sa mga naaapektuhan nang todo ang mga eskwelahan, lalo na ang mga public school.



AKSYON KAILANGAN NA VS KRISIS SA TUBIG

Ang mga private school, lalo na ang mga pangmayayaman, kaya nilang bumili at mag-order ng trak-trak na tubig.

Pero ang mga public school, anak ng tokwa, walang badyet para rito.

Eh kung imadyinin natin na may mga matataas nang gusali ang mga public school at may mga comfort room ang mga second, third, fourth at mas mataas pa, paano ang mga kubeta at ihian diyang?

Pahirapan na sa mga estudyante ang magakyat ng mga baldebadeng tubig.

Tiyak na mamamaho ang mga eskwelahan gaya ng pamamaho ngayon ng maraming tahanan na walang tubig.

Ano ang mangyayari sa mga bata at titser sa mabaho at maruming kapaligiran?

MGA HAYUPAN

Sa mga lugar na may hayupan o alagaan ng mga hayup gaya ng mga libo-libong manok at baboy, paano rin?

Karaniwang may deepwell ang mga ito o kaya'y may suplay mula sa mga local waterwork.

Pero marami na talaga ang natutuyuang ilog at mahinang ground water na pagkunan nila ng tubig.

Kung magagawi kayo, mga Bro, sa lugar na ganito, grabe ang baho ng mga dumi ng manok at baboy.

Kahit isang kilometro ang layo, hindi ka makahinga nang matino sa baho mula sa mga ito.

Maaaring magkaroon din ng peste sa mga hayup at maaapektuhan ang suplay ng pagkain at malamang na magmamahal din ang mga ito.

MGA SAKAHAN

Swerte ang mga mag-sasaka sa palay na nakaani na bago dumating ang tagtuyot.

Swerte rin ang mga may irigasyon.

Pero ang mga may irigasyon ay nasa 1.5 milyon ektarya lamang.

Paano ang mahigit sa 1.5 milyong palayan na umaasa sa ulan at generator na pampatubig na nagsisimula pa lang na magbunga ang mga palay na nakatanim?

Hindi nakapagtata-kang napakabilis na dumami ang nasisiraan ng palay at ayon mismo sa Department of Agriculture, daan-daang milyon na ang halaga ng mga palay na nasisira.

Baka pagmulan pa ito ng kakulangan ng suplay at mahal na bigas.

INUMING TUBIG

Pero may napakahalagang usapin pa, mga Bro, na dapat intindihin.

May namamatay o nagkakasakit na mga tao dahil sa dehydration, o kawalan ng tubig sa katawan.

Paano ang pagluluto ng pagkain, ang pali-igo, ang paglalaba at iba pa?

Dahil sa kawalan ng may maisusuot o pabalik-balik na pagsusuot ng damit dahil walang pambili ng bago, paano ang pagpasok sa trabaho ng mga obrero, estudyante at iba pa?

Hindi rin umaasa na may tubig sa mga pagawaan mula sa mga deepwell dahil pinasasara ang mga ito ng pamahalaan at ng mga konsesyonaryo sa tubig.

Paano makapagtrabaho nang matino ang mga obrero sa hindi magandang amoy sa katawan at kakulangan ng tubig inumin na kakambal lagi ng pagkain?

EMERGENCY

Sa ganitong mga kalagayan, kailangan ang mga emergency na pagkilos ng pamahalaan.

Isa ang pag-uutos sa mga sangay ng pamahalaan na may eroplano na magkaroon ng mga cloud seeding para umulan.

Pero dapat may magawang paraan na magamit lahat ang tubig mula sa dagat, lawa at ilog para maging inumin, pang-irigasyon, panlaban sa sunog, para sa mga ospital, hayupan, sakahan, eskwela at lahat.

oOo

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo ay maaaring iparating sa 0922840-3333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com.



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15 MAR 2019

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Sa Ilocos Norte **RAINWATER HARVESTING TANK SAGOT SA EL NINO**

NAKAHANDA ang iba't ibang munisipyo ng rainwater harvesting tank sa lalawigan ng Ilocos Norte upang malabanan ang matinding epekto ng El Niño sa bansa.

Ang rainwater harvester ay nakatutulong upang makaipon ng tubig mula sa ulan. Nitong mga nakaraang araw, may pabugso-bugso pa ring pag-ulan kahit damang-dama na ang init ng panahon kasabay ang pagbitak ng mga lupa.

Sa bayan naman ng Piddig, hindi problema sa kanila ang pagkukulang ng tubig dahil mayroon na silang malaking dam, ang Abucay impounding dam.

Ginawa ito ng local na gobyerno ng Piddig sa pamamagitan ng pondo mula sa iba't ibang ahensya ng gobyerno, na kung tag-ulan ay nakalilikom ito ng libo-libong metro kubiko at pinapakawalan ito tuwing tag-init.

Dahil dito, hindi masyadong naabala ang mga magsasaka sa bukid, maliban na lamang sa mga mangingisda na may mga fish pond sa kani-kanilang bayan.

Subsidies, warning systems needed for El Niño, say climate activists

By Patricia Denise M. Chiu
@PDMChiuINQ

Climate activists have cautioned that El Niño conditions could come more frequently in the coming years, and at a greater intensity, as a result of global warming.

These activists, which include Kalikasan, Greenpeace Philippines and the Climate Reality Project, called on the government to prepare the sectors most likely to be affected, even as they urged the Duterte administration to provide concrete, workable solutions to slow down climate change.

El Niño is the warm phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation

characterized by reduced rainfall. John Leo Algo, science policy officer of the Climate Reality Project Philippines told the Inquirer that changes in the frequency and intensity of El Niño events "are not completely natural."

'Undoubtedly man-made'

"Current global warming, which is undoubtedly man-made, is very likely to enhance future El Niño episodes and make them more frequent," Algo said.

Leon Dulce, national coordinator for Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, said the government should also be accountable for their lack of planning for El Niño cycles,



PARCHED A farmer examines his arid field amid El Niño.

—MICHAEL B. JAUCIÁN

including this year's, which has aggravated the water crisis in the metro that has left thousands of families cut off from their water supply.

"El Niño cycles should have long been anticipated but government did nothing to prepare our water supplies, agricultural systems and communities," Dulce said.

Dulce called on the government to provide subsidies for the affected communities.

For Wilhelmina Pelegrina, country director for Greenpeace Philippines, the worst is yet to come, in terms of El Niño.

Harsher and longer El Niño events can lead to many devastating consequences, Pelegrina said, including smallholder farmers, fisherfolk and indigenous peoples going hungry and becoming poorer as they bear the

brunt of the impact of El Niño.

Pelegrina said Greenpeace believes that the only way to curb or reverse the negative effects of climate change is to stop the widespread use of oil, coal, fossil fuel and gas.

However, since the organization recognizes that it will be difficult, as an "immediate measure," it said that the national government, as well as local government units and concerned agencies should set up a localized early warning system, such as one through text messages, which ideally, should be at the hands of farmers, fisherfolk, coastal communities and indigenous peoples. INQ



Going green in El Nido

SOMETHING LIKE LIFE

MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO



@akosistellaBM

BERLIN—EL Nido Resorts has always been synonymous with environmental protection and sustainable tourism.

The few times I visited their properties on Miniloc and Lagen Island in Palawan, dubbed by conservationists as “The Last Frontier,” I noticed over the years how their resorts were always clean and organized, their surrounding waters always crystal clear, and the coral reefs underneath remaining lush and profuse with tropical colors, with a myriad of fish and other marine wildlife thriving.

So it's no surprise that Lio Tourism Estate, the newest property of the resort company now owned by Ayala Land Inc., was recognized as among the world's Sustainable Destinations Top 100 for 2018, during the awarding ceremonies at the ITB Berlin on March 6 at the Messe Berlin-Palais am Funkturm. ITB is the largest travel trade fair in the world, and while the Philippines had a modest representation, many private stakeholders in the delegation were quite busy answering queries from international buyers.

In between his very full schedule, I had a short chat with Joey Bernardino, El Nido's group director of sales and marketing, about the prestigious award he received on behalf of the company.

From the beginning of its construction, Lio Tourism Estate aimed to be green. It broke the usual cycle of rating contractors based on their capability to beat deadlines and produce good output alone. “We added the need for them to understand why we must follow strict environmental standards through environmental education seminars,” said Joey. This, coupled with the implementation of policies, resulted in positive changes to workers' behaviors and work practices, he added.

He narrated that most contractors and construction workers in the Philippines are generally more focused on getting the job done, while being remiss in environment-friendly practices. “If left unchecked, proprietors and project developers might end up with illegally sourced building materials, unsanitary work areas [e.g., trash scattered around, cigarette butts tossed everywhere, urinating or, worse, defecating in random areas], and degraded natural areas due to indiscriminate cutting of trees and poaching of wildlife. We saw this as a definite horror story we didn't want happening in our area, especially considering the wealth of natural resources we have in the estate.”

To solve this, he said, Lio applied a multipronged approach, starting first by placing a sustainability officer in the estate, even during the construction stage. The officer required all contractors to undergo the Be GREEN (Guard, Respect, Educate El Nido) orientation prior to the start of any work. In the

orientation, the principles of impact management, leave no trace, clean-as-you-go, child-safe environments, and wildlife-friendly practices were discussed. “We try our best to make sure that each and every contractor and worker understand why we do things the way we do, so that they don't just blindly follow what we tell them to. With every understanding comes the respect, which then pushes them to become stewards themselves,” Joey explained.

The Be GREEN orientations allowed the estate to easily apply other approaches. “We created policies on sustainable sourcing, waste management, smoking, and preservation of trees affected by development to name a few. Each policy had corresponding fees for violations, which act as negative reinforcements,” explained Joey.

To further ensure compliance, Lio conducted random site inspections, with site reports produced and given to contractors who had issues to improve on. The estate also frequently interacted with safety and pollution control officers so that they were able to provide guidance when needed, and come up with solutions to various concerns together, he added.

Management soon noticed significant changes in the workers' behaviors and their work practices in general, Joey underscored, like proposing their own solutions in the balling and moving of trees; going to designated smoking areas for smoking breaks; properly handling, storing and disposing hazardous wastes; cleaning up work areas and quickly responding to requests to conduct housekeeping; segregating wastes and recording generated volumes daily; using their own plastic food containers, utensils and water bottles to support the tourism estate's plastic ban; and organizing cleanups of the coastal

1/2



area and along the road, to name a few.

Despite the government's recent crackdown on resorts and other establishments in El Nido town found violating environmental and easement regulations, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the local government and the Department of Tourism have all recognized Lio Estate as a model of sustainable tourism. With each government audit, the estate is used as a baseline for improvements that need to be implemented throughout the municipality.

Located within Bacuit Bay on the west coast of Northern Palawan, Lio's present crop of equally sustainable resorts are Casa Kalaw, Hotel Covo, Balai Adlao, El Nido Cove Resorts, Seda Lio and hosts a variety of restaurants and bars, with the same mindset of respecting the environment.

The Sustainable Destinations Top 100 competition is organized by the Partnership for the Top 100 and the ITB Earth Award, recognizing tourism destinations that have worked hard to make a difference and take sustainability seriously. ■

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EL Nido Group Director for Sales and Marketing Joey Bernardino (sixth from left) receives the Sustainable Destinations Top 100 award for Lio Tourism Estate, at a ceremony during the ITB Berlin travel trade show on March 6.

A VIEW of Lio Beach in El Nido town, with the estate in the background.





Wala nang lumot sa Boracay — DOT

NILINAW kahapon ng Department of Tourism (DOT) na wala nang lumot na makikita sa Boracay.

Ang paglilinaw ay ginawa ni Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat kasunod ng lumabas na video sa social media na nagpapakita na may lumot sa Station 1 ng Boracay.

Ayon kay Puyat sa kanilang monitoring sa isla ay walang lumot sa dalampasigan, ito ay 5 buwan matapos buksan

mulang ang Boracay sa publiko matapos ang 6 na buwang rehabilitasyon.

Ani Puyat, ang kumakalat na video ay walang petsa kung kailan kinuha kaya maaaring matagal na ito o bago pa man ang pagsasara noong nakaraang taon ng Boracay.

Sa panig ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), sinabi nito na karaniwan na ang paglabas ng lumot kapag panahon ng tag-init su-

balit dahil patuloy pa rin ang paglilinis sa dalampasigan ay natatanggal ang mga lumot. Sa ngayon umano ay wala pa silang nakikitang makakapal na lumot.

Samantala, dahil sa summer season ay number 1 destination ang Boracay, sinabi ni Puyat na ilalagay nila ang buong isla sa ilalalim ng discipline zone, ito umano ay magsisislabing paalala na bawal ang pagkakalat sa isla. **(Tina Mendoza)**



#nationataglance



PHILSTAR/KIROSALLES

MAYON VOLCANO's crater is aglow in this file photo taken January 2018.

BICOL: ALBAY

Mayon Volcano continues 'moderate' unrest level with 6 steam eruptions recorded Wednesday evening

MAYON VOLCANO in Albay remains at a moderate level of unrest with six phreatic eruptions recorded Wednesday evening. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), in its March 14 bulletin as of 8 a.m., said the ash plume generated from these eruptions rose between 200 to 700 meters above the summit before drifting west. Six volcanic earthquakes and three rockfall events were also recorded. In the previous 24 hours, three similar eruptions were also monitored. "Fair crater glow from the summit could be observed at night. Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emission was measured at an average of 763 tonnes/day on 13 March," Phivolcs said. The alert level 2 remains in place, which means the public is warned of possible "sudden explosions, lava collapses, pyroclastic density currents or PDCs and ashfall. Entry is strictly prohibited within the six kilometer-radius Permanent Danger Zone as well as the precautionary seven kilometer-radius extended danger zone. "Active stream/river channels and those identified as perennially lahar-prone areas on all sectors of the volcano should also be avoided, especially during extreme weather conditions when there is heavy and prolonged rainfall," it added.



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ERUPTION SA MAYON MAGPAPATULUY

LALONG pinaigting ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) ang pagbibigay-babala sa mga residente at turista na magtatangkang pumasok sa 6-kilometer Permanent Danger Zone at Extended Danger Zone sa timog-silangang bahagi ng Bulkan Mayon.

Ito ay matapos na maitala ang isang phreatic eruption dakong alas-9:06 kahapon ng umaga at magkakasunod na limang kaparehong volcanic event mula alas-9:39 hanggang alas-11:00 ng gabi na hanggang sa 700 metro ang pinakamataas na inabot ng usok at abo.

Sa isang panayam kay

Phivolcs Director at DOST Undersecretary Renato Solidum, ilan ang nag-ulat na narinig din ang dagundong mula sa bulkan na nagpapahiwatig lamang umano ito ng patuloy na abnormalidad.

Nabatid na tinitingnang mababaw ang pinagmulan ng mga eruption na mula sa lumang deposito ng bulkan batay na rin sa nakitang earthquake signals.

Samantala, sinusuri naman ng Phivolcs kung magtutuloy-tuloy sa kasalukuyang estado ang bulkan o posibleng nagkakaroon umano ng "clearing" upang bigyang-daan ang mas malakas na puwersa na mailalabas.

Sa kasalukuyan, wala pang ulat sa mga barangay na inabot ng bagsak ng abo mula sa naturang bulkan.

**BENEDICT
ABAYGAR, JR.**



GMA awards housing titles to Camp Atienza residents

By Maricel V. Cruz

AFTER 15 years of waiting, 47 urban poor families from Quezon City finally got their housing titles after former President and Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo intervened to speed up the awarding process.

Last Wednesday, Arroyo personally awarded Certificates of Entitlement to Lot Allocation to 47 families in Camp Atienza, in Libis, Quezon City, securing the families' land tenurial status at the socialized housing site.

The 47 families were the first batch of 154 housing family-beneficiaries who have long anticipated the National Housing Authority to undertake subdivision survey and title individual lots in Camp Atienza.

However, this could only be conducted once the property title is transferred from the Bases Conversion Development Authority to the NHA's name. The transfer had been stalled by a 15-year wait for the Bureau of Internal Revenue to grant an exemption to real property tax.

The issuance of CELAs is therefore a watershed moment for Camp Atienza residents, who are now assured of their rights to the land they occupy.

Moreover, it is a milestone in the families' long road to secure land tenurial status. The Atienza Neighborhood Association's request for proclamation on housing was originally sent to Malacañang in 1993, where it gathered dust awaiting action.

It was only when the Speaker took the helm as President that the request materialized. Nearly a decade after it was first sent to Malacañang, the request gathered momentum when then-President Arroyo signed Executive Order 116 in 2002.

EO 116 declared large swaths of Camp Claudio in Tambo, Parañaque and Camp

Atienza in Libis, Quezon City as socialized housing sites for disposition to qualified occupants. It paved the way for a memorandum of agreement to finally implement the housing project.

The MOA was signed in 2006 among the NHA, the BCDA, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Local Government of Quezon City, and the Office of the Congressman of the 3rd District of Quezon City.

In 2009, the BCDA conveyed the property to the NHA, the project administrator, for disposition to qualified beneficiaries.

Over the course of the next eight years until 2017, the BCDA and NHA worked on the required documentation to transfer the land titles to the BCDA; amend the BDA's deed of conveyance to correct the area covered for housing from 5,340 sqm to a whopping 5,434 sqm; and finally, amend the BCDA's exemption from real property tax.



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MERALCO, MULING PINAGTIBAY ANG ADHIKAIN PARA SA KALIKASAN SA TULONG NG SOLAR MICRO GRID

PAILAWAN ang kanayunan gamit ang enerhiyang solar.

Nangunguna ang Filipinas sa Asia sa pag-generate ng elektrisidad gamit ang makabagong sistema ng solar photovoltaic, ayon sa isang eksperto sa renewable energy mula pa sa Netherlands. Sa buong daigdig, pang-lima ang ating bansa sa naturang industriya kasunod ang Chile, South Africa, Brazil at Thailand.

Sa kasalukuyan, ang solar power ang itinuturing na pinakamurang paraan para makagawa ng elektrisidad sa maraming bansa kasama na ang Filipinas na isang bansang may matinding sikat ng araw sa loob ng buong taon.

Ipinagpala tayo sa pagkakaroon ng napakaraming natural na pagkukunan ng enerhiya na maaaring gamitin para mapunan ang pangangailangan ng bansa sa koryente. Dapat nating gamitin ang mga ito para sa kapaanan ng nakararami. Renewable energy ang itinuturing na bagong mukha ng industriya ng koryente. Hindi maitatangi ang linis ng teknolohiyang ito kumpara sa kasalukuyang pinagkukuhanan natin ng koryente.

bing nakikita niyang malaking tulong ang maibibigay ng renewable energy katulad ng enerhiyang solar para mapunan ang pangangailangan ng bansa sa koryente sa mga susunod na taon. Ayon kay Cusi, may mandato ang kanyang kagawaran na seguruhing may sapat na suplay, maaasahan at murang elektrisidad ang bansa. Dagdag pa niya bukas ang kanyang departamento sa paggamit ng makabagong teknolohiya para mapagiting ang paggamit ng mga natural na pinagmumulan ng enerhiya. Ito ang dahilan kaya nakipagtulungan ang Meralco sa DOE at lokal na unit ng pamahalaan sa bayan at siyudad ng Batangas gayundin sa United States Agency for International Development (USAID), upang maitayo at opisyal na buksan ang 32-kilowatt (kW) solar panel microgrid at pasilidad para sa 192 kilowatthour (kWh) battery storage sa Isla Verde noong nakaraang linggo.

Napakalaking bagay ang nagawa ng proyektong ito dahil mas mapapabuti ang pamumuhay ng mga residenteng nagkaroon ng koryente sa pamamagitan ng proyektong ito ng Meralco.

Ito ay isa lamang sa paraan kung paano maaaring umunlad at umangat ang antas ng kabuhayan ng mga taga-Isla Verde ngayong mayroon nang pinagkukuhanan ng koryenteng pangmatagalan ang islang ito. Bago naisagawa ang proyektong ito, ang Isla Verde ay umaasa lamang sa mga generator sets gamit ang diesel,

dahil hindi na mangangailangan na gumamit pa ng diesel para sa mga generator set para lamang pansamantalang magkaroon ng koryente sa lugar. Kung matatandaan din, isa sa mga iniutos ni Pangulong Duterte sa industriya ng koryente ang pagkakaroon ng koryente sa buong Filipinas lalo roon sa mga liblib



NAPAILAWAN ang Isla Verde sa pagtutulungan ng Meralco, USAID, at Batangas City LGU. Makikita sa larawan ang mga dumalo sa inauguration ng Solar Micro-Grid System na sila (L-R) Meralco Power Gen President Rogelio L. Singson, Batangas 5th District Representative, Cong. Marvey Mariño, Batangas City Mayor Beverley Rose A. Dimacuja, San Agapito Barangay Chairman Edmar Rieta, DOE Undersecretary Felix William Fuentesbella, USAID Philippines Deputy Office Chief for Environment and Mission Disaster Relief Mr. Paul Seong, Meralco Sr. VP and Head of Networks, Mr. Ronnie L. Aperocho, at Meralco VP and Head of Regulatory Management and Regulatory Affairs, Atty. Jose Ronald V. Valles.



MAKIKITA sa larawan ang 32kW solar panel microgrid na nagsupply ng koryente sa Isla Verde, Batangas.

Kasalukuyang namamayagpag ang malinis at luntiang teknolohiya hindi lang sa ating bansa kundi sa buong mundo. Hindi lamang ng pag-unlad ng ating ekonomiya at ng ating bansa ang pinag-uusapan dito kung hindi ang pagbuti ng antas ng kabuhayan nating mga Filipino.

Mismong ang kalihim ng Department of Energy (DOE) na si Alfonso Cusi ang nagsa-

Bagamat naka-puwesto sa tagong lugar, hindi maitatangi ang likas na kagandahang taglay ng Isla Verde. Ito ay tila tagong paraiso ng Batangas. Napakalaki ng potensyal nito na maging kabilang sa mga lugar sa bansa na gugustuhing dayuhin ng mga turista.

Ang pagkakaroon ng koryente sa islang ito ang unang hakbang upang mangyari ito.

baterya ng sasakyan, at maliliit na solar panel sa lugar.

Ang lahat ng mga nabanggit ay sapat lamang upang makapagbigay ng supply ng koryente sa lugar sa loob ng apat na oras kada araw.

Ang tagong lokasyon ng Isla Verde ay may mga mabuti at 'di mabuting epekto. Upang matunton ang Isla Verde, kailangang sumakay ng bangka at bumiyaheng isa't kalahating oras. Ito rin ang dahilan kung bakit hindi ito nababahaginan ng koryente sa Luzon grid.

Ngunit sa pamamagitan ng renewable energy ay maseresbisyuhan na rin sa wakas ng koryente ang lugar na ito.

Ang Isla Verde ang unang solar microgrid project ng Meralco. Anim na barangay sa Isla Verde ang nagbago ang buhay dahil sa proyektong ito.

Bunsod ng pagkakaroon ng solar microgrid sa lugar, bababa na rin ang carbon footprint nito

na lugar na nangangailangan ng ayuda ng pamahalaan.

Ang tagumpay ng mga nabanggit na proyektong ito ng Meralco ay patunay kung gaano kalaking pagbabago ang kaya nating gawin kung tayo ay magkakaisa at magtutulungan para sa isang adhikain – ang kaunlaran ng bansa at ng bawat Filipino.

Tunay na nakagagalak ang makitang sama-sama, tulong-tulong at sumusuporta sa isa't isa ang DOE, Meralco, at lokal na pamahalaan ng Batangas.

Ang pagpapailaw sa Isla Verde ay unang hakbang lamang sa isang maliwanag na bukas.

Nakatataba ng puso na makitang masaya na ang maraming pamilya sa isla dahil mayroon na silang malinis at maaasahang koryente.

Ipagpapatuloy ng Meralco ang pagbibigay ng liwanag sa iba pang kanayunan sa taong ito at sa mga susunod pang taon.