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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Stop throwing trash in creeks, DENR urges residents

RESIDENTS along major waterways in the metropolis have been urged to become environment-conscious by not throwing trash in creeks and rivers to help fast-track the cleanup of Manila Bay and its tributaries.

During the cleanup of the Maytunas Creek in San Juan City's Barangay Addition Hills, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Assistant Secretary Joselin Marcus Fragada said preventing the throwing of trash in waterways would significantly reduce the blanket of trash in creeks, which would make it easier to clean up Manila Bay.

The Maytunas Creek flows into San Juan River, a major tributary of Pasig River, which flows into Manila Bay. Trash that make it into the river can be swept out into the bay.

"Many factors are contributing to San Juan River's problems but one thing that can help right away is for us, as individuals, to be conscious about not throwing trash there," Fragada said on Sunday during a program in San Juan City's Barangay Addition Hills where the DENR spearheaded the cleanup of the Maytunas Creek.

The Maytunas, Ermitanyo, Mariblo, Diliman, Dario and Culiati creeks are tributaries of the 10.58-kilometer long San Juan River, which flows through the cities of Quezon, San Juan, Manila, and Mandaluyong.

The Maytunas Creek cleanup was among the activities that kicked off the Metro Manila-wide "Battle for Rivers and Esteros" simultaneous cleanup of Manila Bay's tributaries.

Fragada said one of the major pollutants of Manila Bay are the wastes from its tributaries.

He said cleaning up tributaries is part of efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay. To boost rehabilitation efforts for Manila Bay, he said, the Interior department has already ordered barangay local government units to undertake a weekly cleanup of waterways in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

"We made a pledge today as individuals to become conscious of the environment," Fragada said. "Tarpaulins we gave to barangays earlier are only signs we want cleanliness in San Juan River and Manila Bay. Try placing these tarpaulins in strategic places. Create consciousness."

Making people environment-conscious is essential to the success of Manila Bay's cleanup and rehabilitation. "River cleanup is a long process, so let's start here," he added. PNA



Caloocan joins river, estero cleanup drive

By Jun David

IN A bid to restore the former glory of Manila Bay, the City Government of Caloocan took part in the simultaneous clean-up activities of rivers and esteros over the weekend.

Dubbed the "Battle for Manila Bay," the activity in Tullahan River in Barangay 164 was led by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año, and Metro Manila Development Authority Chairman Danilo Lim.

Speaking in front of more than 500 volunteers, Cimatu lauded the participants' efforts, saying: "This is the most prepared, most organized, and most attended activity."

On behalf of Mayor Oscar Malapitan, City Administrator Oliver Hernandez welcomed the officials and volunteers and vowed to continue the city's full support for the rehabilitation of the historic water landmark.

"The City Government of Caloocan led by our City Mayor Oscar Malapitan is in full support for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay," CA Hernandez emphasized.



DENR may kakampi sa Manila Bay rehab

NAKAHANAP ng kakampi ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources makaraang suportahan ng isang environmental group ang ginagawang rehabilitasyon ng nasabing ahensya ng gobyerno sa Manila Bay.

Sa panayam kay Jose "Bong" Joson Teves Jr, ng Talino at Galing ng Pilipino (TGP) partylist, dapat umanong palakasin ang implementasyon ng RA 9003 o ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Aniya sa pamamagitan nito ay makababawas sa basura dahil sa mga bahay-bahay pa lang ay hinihiwalay na ang maaaring pakinabangang kalakal tulad ng mga plastic bottle na kadalasang nakukuha sa Manila Bay.

Layon din ng TGP na tulungan ang local government unit na mabigyan ng pagkakitaan o karagdang pondo sa pamamagitan ng nasabing programa dahil ito ay maituturing nang isang livelihood project na makatutulong sa mga residente kung saan isusulong ang pagkakaroon ng 5% Environmental Fund para sa probinsya, munisipalidad at barangay upang maipatupad nang maayos ang RA 9003.

Dagdag pa ni Teves, sa 1,000 metric tons o katumbas ng 1,000,000 kilo na recyclable waste paper na hindi mare-recycle ay may katumbas umano itong 1,000 puno na puputulin kaya dapat itaguyod ng TGP ang kapakanan ng kapaligiran para sa kinabukasan ng mga kabataan.

Sa pamamagitan niya ng malinis na kapaligiran, kaakibat nito ang kalusugan ng mamamayan.

JAY REYES



Remate

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

12
PAGE

UPPER STORY
LOWER STORY
13 SCAN 2019
BANNER STORY
EDITORIAL
CARTOON

02 APR 2019

DATE

HINDI imposible na muling mabuhay ang Manila Bay at mga ilog na malalaki na lumuluwa sa nasabing bay o lawa.

Yun bang === magiging pagkunan ng mga pagkain na walang lason at sentro ng turismo ng mga ito.

Kung nagagawa ng ibang mga bansa na buhay na buhay ang kanilang mga lawa at ilog, bakit hindi sa atin sa mahal kong Pinas?

PATAY HALOS LAHAT

Ang sigurado tayo, patay na lahat ang mga ilog, kanal at estero.

Bukod sa mga solid na basura gaya ng mga plastic, putik, burak, kahoy, yero, goma at iba pa, napakadumi rin ito sa polusyon sa kemikal at tae ng tao.

Kabilang sa mga malalaking ilog patungo sa Manila Bay, sa Metro Manila lamang, ang Pasig River, Tullahan River, Tangos River, Las Piñas River, Meycauayan River, Parañaque River, Marikina River, San Juan River at iba pa.

Napakaraming kanal, estero at drainage ang papunta sa mga ilog na ito.

Ang lahat ng ilog na ito ay papunta sa Manila Bay habang ang iba ay papunta sa Laguna de Bay.

Kaya naman, kapag naglasang gilik na ang mga isda, hipon, alimango, shell at iba pa, sigurado, palatandaan ang mga ito ng grabeng polusyon nakamamatay at ikinasasakit ng mga mamamayan.

Isa pang palatandaan na grabe ang polusyon sa mga ito ang baho, mahalukay man o hindi.

Sa pagluwa ng mga ilog na ito sa Manila Bay, lahat ng mapuntahan ng mga tubig ay magkakaroon din ng mga solid waste, lason, kemikal at dumi ng tao at hayop.

Kapag kinain o ininom ang mga ito ng mga hipon, shell, isda, alimango, alimasag at iba pa na atin ding kakainin, diyan na magkandaletse-letse ang ating kalusugan na maaari nating ikasakit at ikamatay.

MAGLINIS

Kaya naman, mahalagang pag-usapan kung gaano magiging malinis.

Unang-una, dapat talagang sa bahay palang, matutunan na ang



ULTIMATUM

Ni BENNY ANTIPORDA

PAGKAIN AT PANTURISTA SA MANILA BAY, MGA ILOG

pagtatapon ng basura na hiwalay ang mga nabubulok at 'di nabubulok.

Hintayin ang mga trak ng basura na siyang magdadala sa mga dapat na pagtatapunan.

Ikalawa, kung wala tayo sa bahay, huwag itapon kung saan-saan ang mga bitbit nating basura na personal o kaya habang tayo'y naglalakbay.

Ang mga maliliit gaya ng mga plastik wrapper ng mga kendi o upos ng sigarilyo, pwede nating ibulsa at kung nakasakay tayo sa mga pampublikong sasakyan, itapon ang basura sa mga basurahan ng mga ito, gaya ng mga jeepney na may dalang basurahan.

Ikatio, huwag na huwag magtapon ng basura sa mga estero, kanal, drainage, ilog at iba pa.

Huwag namang pagawain pa ang gobyerno ng mga bakod sa lahat ng mga daluyan ng tubig para pamigil sa atin sa pagtatapon ng basura.

Napakalaki kaya ang gastos diyan na pupwedeng ibalik sa atin bilang mamamayan sa anyo ng ibang mga serbisyo.

Ikaapat, ang mga trak ng basura ay dapat na maingat din sa pagdadala ng mga basura sa mga dumping site.

Huwag hayaang tangayin ng ulan ang mga basura hanggang sa aagos ang mga ito sa mga ilog, kanal at estero rin.

MGA BENEPISYO

Bukod sa mapigilan ang pagkakasakit natin hanggang sa tayo'y matatay dahil lang sa basura, marami pang bagay ang benepisyo mula sa basura-free na komunidad.

Una, pwede nating gawing daan ang mga ilog para tayo makabiyaha nang ligtas patawid o papunta mula sa isang lugar sa iba pang lugar.

Ginagawa ito ngayon sa Pasig River.

Tinitiiis lang ang baho rito kung minsan.

Ikalawa, pwede ta-yong magkaroon ng komersyo sa mga gilid ng ilog.

Ang komersyo ay pupwedeng konektado sa

turismo.

Sa ibang mga bansa, ginagawang tourist spot ang mga ilog at kumikita ang mga bangkero sa pamamasyal ng mga turista, lokal man o dayuhan.

At puno ng mga kainan, tindahan at iba pa ang mga babaan-sakayan.

Ikatio, malaking kabawasan ang biyaheng ilog sa oras ng biyahe kumpara sa transportasyon sa lupa na may grabeng trapik.

Ikaapat, malaki ang kabawasan sa badyet ng pamahalaan para sa repair ng mga tulay na madalas masira dahil sa pagbara ng mga solidong basura sa tag-ulan, tagbaha at tagbagyo.

Sa halip na ibuhos ang milyon-milyong buwis sa pag-repair ng mga tulay na nasisira at pag-apaw ng tubig-baha ng mga kalsada dahil sa mga basura, maaaring idivert ang mga pondo sa mga proyektong panghanapbuhay ng mga mamamayan.

BILYON ANG NASASAYANG

Kung pagsama-samahin ang gastos ng mga pamahalaang nasayun at lokal sa pagkontrol sa basura, bilyon-bilyong piso ang ating bibilangin.

Kung makatutulong tayong lahat na mamamayan sa pagkakaroon ng disiplina sa pagtatapon ng basura, malaki ang matitipid ng pamahalaan na pupwede nating hilingin para sa ibang mga proyekto na ating ikabubuhay at ikagiginhawa.

Kahilingan ngayon na sa paglilinis ng kapaligiran, kasama ang mga ilog, estero, kanal, drainage at iba pa, sasama po tayo, kahit bilang mga volunteer sa kahit mga tapat lang natin.

Okey po ba?

oOo

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



#MINDANAO

Why the 'coastal clean up' craze is good

By JOHN TRIA

HAPPY Earth Day everyone! Perhaps no image has inspired us more about the environment than that of a "cleaner" Boracay Beach and Manila Bay. We've seen it all on social media and are inspired by it.

Yet the long-term effect of these clean-up activities in various cities like Cebu, Davao, Samar force us to go beyond our politics.

While these may not titillate the chattering elites who consider them work for the hoi polloi, they bring the rest of the country together in an action meant not only to beautify tourist spots and bring more visitors and revenue, but more importantly, preserve water resources we may need to tap in the future to fill our own needs.

This is especially true now that a bigger number of Filipinos lives in urban areas.

Some of us recall former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's dogged effort to clean the Singapore river. Looking back, it marshalled a national effort and helped protect Singapore's future, since clean rivers, coasts, and catchment areas now form part of the city state's water

sources.

Investing in clean-up efforts now will secure the water of our cities.

Questions for Facebook (FB)

Curiously, Facebook's announcement that it shut down the account of an individual it believes is behind fake news for "coordinated, inauthentic behavior" is surprising, and raises vital questions.

The publicly listed Menlo Park, California, company claims 2.5 billion monthly active users worldwide. Half our own country's 105-million population log on to FB for news and communication, getting them engaged in a way that they were never able to before.

Facebook thrives by expanding networks of communication that become platforms of shared content. When people talk about it together, it becomes a group, expanding when they invite others to join. Facebook thus became a venue for "coordinated behavior" that links families and classmates, organizes enterprises, and causes.

The resulting size of these interactions grew larger than that of many mainstream media publications, fertile ground for advertising and revenue for it to promote your posts

on its wide platform.

Being from Mindanao, social media and the connectivity it brings is a bridge to trade contacts that help facilitate business to business dealings, allowing the island's businesses to link up for trade, and achieve success despite being outside the influence corridors of Manila's business circles, which were once the sole gateway for business.

That said, Facebook has become part of the daily life of many Pinoys.

Thus, the announcements by Facebook to close the accounts of certain people it says committed "coordinated inauthentic behavior" in the United States, Iran, and even here in the person of former media executive Nic Gabunada raises a believe should be answered.

Many of us reading this column are FB account holders and join pages and groups within the network aligned with our desires and causes. How was FB able to determine and link those supposedly inappropriate pages to your account? How do we know if our "coordinated behavior" is "inauthentic" in their eyes?

Likewise, in calling a press briefing to announce the results of an investigation into your account, will you be informed that such a briefing



would take place and that you will be publicly named? Can and will the same thing happen to us?

Therefore, the decision to close a person's account and publicly announce it needs to be explained, or justified more carefully.

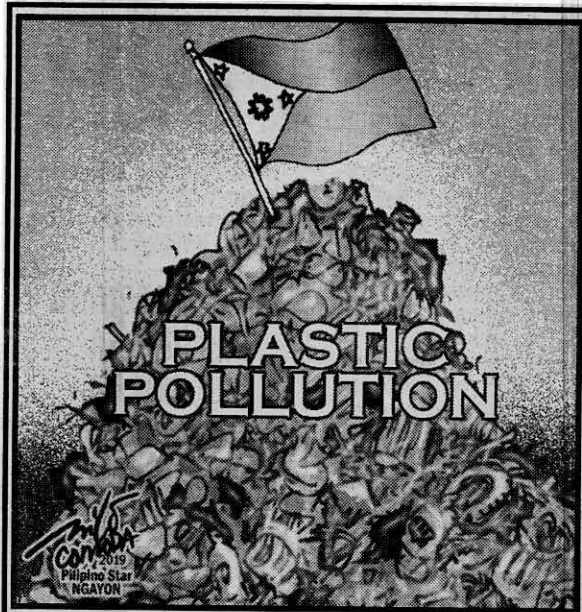
Facebook ought to be able to say that it is fair to its account holders and subscribers, and will not engage official actions against account holders without their consent or at the very least, prior notice,

a part of due process.

Otherwise, you as a user may be linked to inappropriate behavior without your knowledge.

After all, the good Facebook has brought us grew partly on the basis of coordinated behavior, being a social network. It would not be good for confidence in FB to erode.

For reactions: [facebook.com/johntrialog](https://www.facebook.com/johntrialog)



Editorial

Bawasan, paggamit ng plastic

KATLO ang Pilipinas sa mga bansa sa Southeast Asia na maraming itinatapong basurang plastic sa karagatan. Nangunguna ang China at ikalawa ang Indonesia. Ayon naman sa United Nations, panglima ang Pilipinas sa mga bansa sa buong mundo na contributors ng plastic wastes sa karagatan. Karaniwang makikita sa karagatan ay mga basyo ng softdrinks, mineral waters, plastic shopping bags, sachet ng coffee, shampoo, noodles, toothpaste tube at maski mga sako ng bigas, at iba pang basurang hindi natutunaw. Namumulaklak ang mga basurang plastic sa karagatan na hindi maubus-ubos.

Hinikayat naman ng pamahalaan ang publiko na limitahan ang paggamit ng plastics. Sabi ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo, nararapat na tumulong ang mamamayan para maisalba at maprotektahan ang kalikasan. Ang paghikayat na bawasan ang paggamit ng plastic ay kasunod ng pagdiriwang ng Earth Hour noong Sabado. Bahagi ng pagdiriwang ng Earth Hour ay ang sabay-sabay na pagpatay ng ilaw sa buong mundo sa loob ng isang oras.

Malaking problema ang basurang plastic. Sa kabila na marami nang mga bayan at siyudad ang nagbawal sa paggamit ng mga plastic na supot o shopping bags, marami pa rin ang hindi sumusunod. Dito sa Metro Manila, mayroon pa ring mga lungsod na hinahayaang gumamit ng supot na plastics ang mga kilalang mall. Dahil dito kaya walang katapusan ang pagkalat ng basurang plastic sa pamayanan. Wala ring epekto ang ginagawa ng ibang siyudad na paghihigpit sapagkat ang katabing bayan o lungsod ay patuloy sa paggamit ng plastic bag.

Nasa kamay ng local government units (LGUs) kung paano malilimitahan ang paggamit ng plastic sa pamayanan. Mag-isyu ng ordinansa na nagbawal sa plastic bags o shopping bags sa mga malalaking mall. Ipatupad ito nang mahigpit at parusahan ang mga may-ari ng malls na hindi susunod. Nasa kamay ng LGUs kung paano masosolb ang plastic pollution.



Alternative supply of timber eyed

LANDS covered by the government's Community-Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) have the potential to provide adequate supply of plantations logs for domestic market in addition to Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) areas, according to an official of the Forest Management Bureau (FMB).

"The 94,000 hectares per annum for a 10 to 15 year rotation, will only require a planting area of almost one million hectares (only around 40 percent of the combined area of IFMA and CBFMA)," said Nonito Tamayo, director at the FMB of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Tamayo cited data indicating that from year 2006 to 2014, the supply of wood and wood-based products in the country was no longer sufficient to meet the consumption of the wood-using sectors.

CBFM, a national strategy for sustainable development, applies to all areas classified as forest lands, including allowable zones within protected areas not covered by prior vested rights.

Tamayo said the accomplishments under National Greening Program (NGP) could help close the gap between the demand and supply

of timber.

"Many of the established plantations under NGP were mainly intended to achieve ecological stability, and rehabilitation of critical watersheds," he said.

Iñigo Angwas Jr., president of National Federation of CBFM people's organizations (POs) and NGPPOs in the Philippines, said it is imperative to further hasten the tedious process of approving the CBFM application, renewal, and expansion of their areas for NGP.

To further increase the economic activities of CBFM-POs and to supply for the increasing demand for wood and wood products, Angwas said the government needs to provide support in acquiring wood processing plants for every regional CBFM-POs federation.

He also sought technical assistance through technology transfer from the academe, and other agencies related to the production and value adding of forest-based products.

"The CBFM-POs is requesting the assistance of DENR and support institutions to realize our vision to become not only wood producers but also wood processors including marketing of forest products," Angwas added. - *Philexport News & Features*



Water Board reduces allocation for CL irrigation

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) on Monday has reduced the water allocation for irrigation in Central Luzon to ensure continuous supply for Metro Manila's domestic water requirements during the dry season.

Starting April 1, water allocation for farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga will be reduced from 40 cubic meters (cms) to 35 cms.

NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr. however assured that the implementation of lower water allocation for agricultural lands will not impede irrigation activities as it is already harvest season.

Meanwhile, water allocation for Metro Manila's water supply remains at 48 cms.

NWRB, an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is in-charge of the allocation of water supply from the Angat Dam to the National Irrigation Administration for the irrigation of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga, and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System for the water requirements of households in Metro Manila.

Earlier, David said the NWRB prioritizes the requirements for domestic water supply for Metro Manila by providing the maximum allocation from the Angat Dam.

About 96 percent of Metro Manila's domestic requirements are sourced from Angat Dam.

As of Monday, the water level at Angat Dam remains normal at 192.76 meters, but down from last Sunday's 193.14 meters.

Angat Dam's normal high water level during the rainy season is 212 meters.



Irrigation allocation from Angat Dam reduced

By **LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON**

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has reduced the allocation for irrigation coming from Angat Dam, Metro Manila's main water source.

Starting yesterday, water supply for agriculture was reduced to 35 cubic meters per second from the average 42 cubic meters per second.

The state weather bureau has warned that Angat Dam may reach its critical level by the end of April. Its water level is now at 192.76 meters, or 19.24 meters below its normal high water level of 212 meters.

Angat Dam would reach critical level once water available hits the 180-meter mark. Its water level has been dropping by an average of 41 centimeters daily.

"The supply reduction will have a minimal effect on agricultural produce because farmers are already in the middle of the planting season, which needs less water compared to its outset during which fields need to be soaked," NWRB executive director Sevillo David said.

Irrigation supply in some parts of Bulacan and Pampanga will be reduced starting this month, according to the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

Josephine Salazar, NIA Central Luzon director, said the supply reduction would not affect farm lands in the two provinces as farmers have started harvesting their crops.

Located in Barangay San Lorenzo in Norzagaray, Bulacan, Angat Dam supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's water

needs and powers the Angat hydroelectric power plant.

Earlier, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said 42 provinces would experience dry spell and 22 others would experience drought starting this month.

The drought is expected to worsen by May as 33 provinces are seen affected.

El Niño is associated with below normal rainfall. It is expected to last until August.

Water bill waiver

Meanwhile, east zone conces-

sionaire Manila Water will start waiving the full bill of customers in 44 barangays in its serviced area that have been severely affected by the water supply shortage since March 6.

"They will receive a one-time waiver of their full March consumption," Manila Water said.

"These customers, however, will still be able to receive a waiver for the first 10 cubic meters of their March consumption to be deducted in the bill that they will receive this month," it added.

Among the barangays that are eligible for full bill waiver are Addition Hills, Barangka Drive,

Plainview, Highway Hills and Hulo in Mandaluyong.

Also included are Barangays Kapitolyo, Bagong Ilog and Oranbo in Pasig; Upper Bicutan in Taguig, and Mambog in Binangonan.

Manila Water continues to validate other barangays to ensure that only those severely affected by the water supply mess will get full bill waiver for their March consumption.

An initial estimate of 152,000 households will enjoy the full bill waiver.

The full waiver, however, does not apply to previous unpaid bills.

- With Ramon Efren Lazaro



Water level watch at dams not encouraging

BY ANGELA LOPEZ DE LEON

WATER reserves at Angat, La Mesa and Ipo dams continued to dip yesterday due to lack of rain and extreme heat, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Hydrologist Danny Flores said water level at La Mesa Dam dropped by two centimeters for the past 24 hour. At 6 a.m. yesterday, the water reserve in the dam was at 68.53 meters, lower than the

68.55 meters on Sunday morning and the lowest water level in La Mesa's record.

La Mesa Dam has breached its critical level of 69 meters last March 10.

La Mesa gets its water supply from Angat Dam in Bulacan. Water from Angat passes through the Ipo Dam also in Bulacan then flows into La Mesa.

Flores said the water level at Angat continued to decline but

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See WATER ► Page B3

WATER

noted it can still supply water to La Mesa Dam.

He said the water level at Angat dropped to 192.76 meters yesterday morning from 193.14 meters on Sunday morning.

The dam's critical water level is

at 180 meters. Once it dips to 180 meters, the water supply for irrigation will be the first to be affected.

Angat provides water for the irrigation requirements of thousands of hectares of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga aside from supplying more than 90 percent of Metro Manila's water needs.

A part of the dam's water supply is also used to generate electricity for Luzon.

Water reserve of Ipo Dam stood at 101 meters yesterday morning, down by two centimeter from its 101.02 meter level on Sunday morning.

Flores said the critical water level of Ipo is 97 meters.



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AP
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

FEATURE
STORY

EDITORIAL

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02 APR 2019

DATE

1/2

Is the Kaliwa Dam really the best option to avoid a recurrence of the water shortage?

ACCORDING to our discussions and research, the following statements are facts that must be considered:

Manila has two water services, namely Maynilad and Manila Water. Since 1997, Maynilad has been supplying 60 percent of the water needs of Metro Manila residents while 40 percent has been provided by Manila Water. Until 2016, Manila Water and Maynilad had been dependent on Angat Dam.

Due to demand growth, Manila Water encountered a problem with its services and its solution was to make La Mesa Dam cover for the shortfall. With the previous water interruption, statements from agencies are pointing out that water in La Mesa Dam is at a critical level. According to Manila Water, the water shortage was due to El Niño. However, even if there's a shortage in La Mesa Dam, 96 percent of the water supplied to Metro Manila comes from Angat Dam. Furthermore, Pag-Asa completely denied that it was El Niño that caused the water shortage.

If it was El Niño, then all of our water reservoirs would dry up as well. However, both Angat Dam and Ipo Dam are at normal levels. Only La Mesa Dam was experiencing the critical water level. The water from Angat Dam travels through the bypass and goes to Ipo Dam. The water from Ipo Dam will also travel through the bypass to reach the La Mesa Dam where the aqueduct is located. According to the Manila Water Chief Operating Officer, El Niño aggravated it because there's so little rain nowadays, but he also explained that it could be more of a supply and demand problem. Manila Water added that the aqueducts were not enough to supply the water from Angat and Ipo. They also said that they expected this to happen between of 2021 and 2022. With the data and research gathered, the private water companies already concluded that water shortage would be inevitable. With this, the government must find a way to prevent the shortage from happening.

LETTER

Send comments to opinion@manilatimes.net or write to the Opinion Editor, The Manila Times, 2/F Sitio Grande, 409 A. Soriano Avenue, Intramuros, Manila 1002

In 2014, the Metropolitan Water Works and Sewerage Systems (MWSS) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) proposed a plan to ensure water security so that Metro Manila would not be dependent on Angat Dam. The proposal is the Kaliwa Dam project. It was approved by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Center. But environmentalists were alarmed because the project would damage 291 hectares in Sierra Madre Mountain ranges and harm the indigenous people, the Dumagat-Remontados tribes. The project was put on hold after environmentalists took steps to protect the environment and the people.

However, when the Duterte administration took charge, the source of funds changed from government and PPP to private investors and foreign loans. After five years, the idea of Kaliwa Dam project is presented again at the same time as the water interruption. Why did we stop then if the risks are still the same? The P18.7-billion project will be funded by China in the form of a loan. Eventually, by analyzing the situation, years from now, Filipinos will be the ones to pay for this debt. The question is, "Is water shortage the problem?"

We can see that Angat Dam is not really experiencing a critical water level. If that were the case, why would La Mesa Dam be the only one experiencing it? The fact is, Angat and Ipo dams, which are the sources of its water, are not suffering from the alleged 'shortage'. We got curious when we saw the collated data. Is it really because of the El Niño, or is it because of the proposal for Kaliwa Dam that would save us from this drought? Because we know that if they build this dam, there would be many people, most especially the ancestral domains of

Dumagat-Remontados tribes who have lived in that place ever since, who would suffer the loss of their livelihood.

Despite all the benefits this Kaliwa Dam could offer to the people, we cannot ignore the fact that these tribes would lose their homes. They would be relocated to a new environment that

we're not sure they could adapt to. Not just that, the environmental diversity of Sierra Madre would also be sacrificed and obliterated. Finding an efficient solution should not lead to the creation of another problem again.

Then, we could ask ourselves, is it really worth the relocation of the indigenous people, the destruction of Sierra Madre, the dangers of flash floods, and the huge debt to China?

Is the Kaliwa Dam the best project our government can propose? With this kind of perspective, we would be facing not only a water shortage but a bigger mishap in the future.

In our own opinion, Kaliwa Dam is not the most efficient and effective solution for this kind of problem. We cannot stand seeing innocent people face, solely, the consequences of this proposed "solution." Yes, we are facing a real threat regarding the shortage of water but we think that adopting a solution that will also cause another problem is not a pure solution to the problem itself.

As students and members of our society, we want to further understand if there's a connection between the proposed project and the water shortage phenomenon. From our viewpoint and based on our research, the water shortage was orchestrated by the government to push the Kaliwa Dam project. Of all the times they could propose the project, why did that resurface exactly during the crisis? The occurrence of the problem and the resurfacing of the



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AL
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

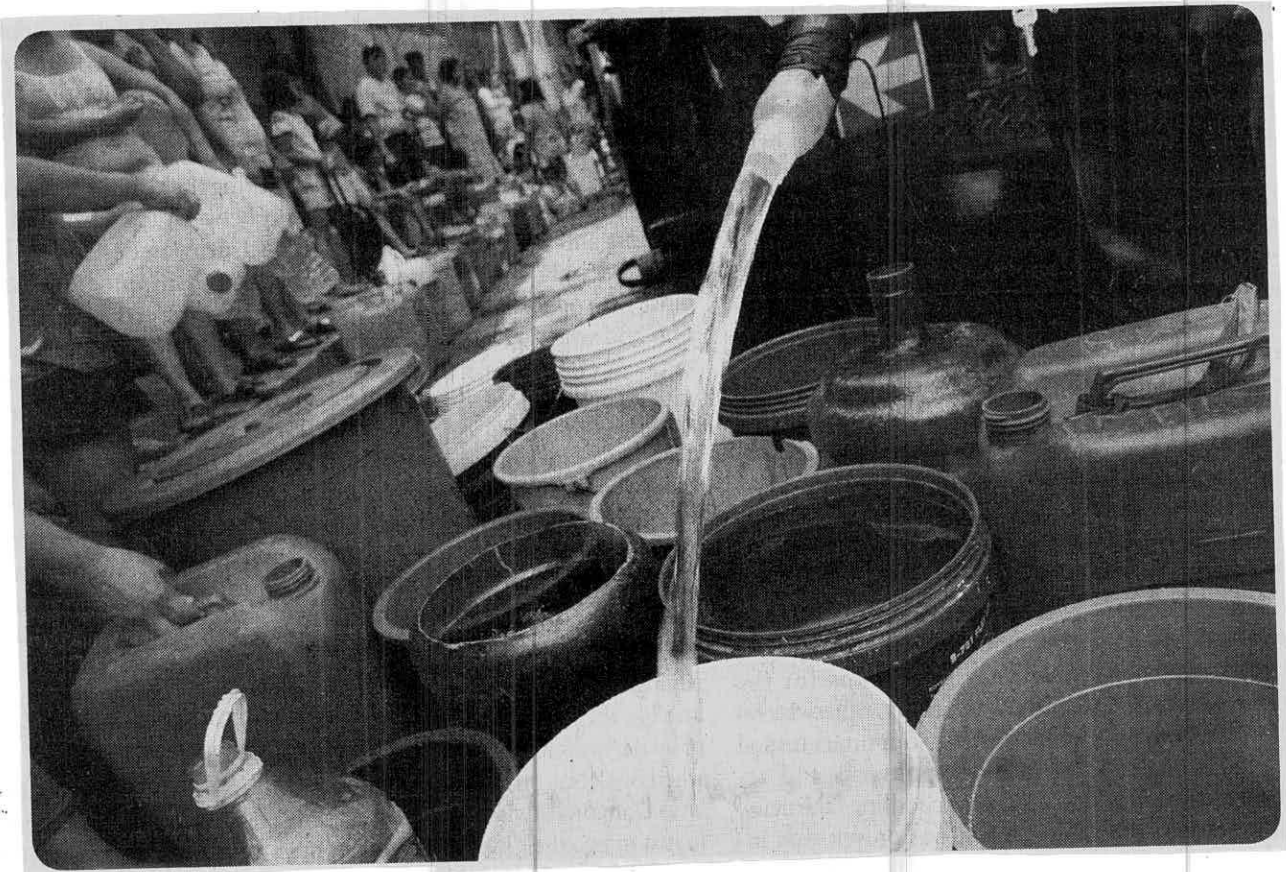
LEADER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 APR 2019

DATE



proposed project are suspicious.

Furthermore, the problem was resolved right away with President Rodrigo Duterte's single command. It makes us wonder if there was truly a "water shortage." After Duterte's command, it only took a day to restore the water supply. This is our concern because if the project goes ahead, years from now, we will be the ones who will pay the "loan," more likely the unpayable debt that the Philippines borrowed from China. At this point, we want to further know the current status of the project and if this will push ahead despite the debt risk entailed.

Environmentalists also say this project will technically destroy 291 hectares of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges.

Basically, the Sierra Madre absorbs the strongest of the typhoons and minimizes their intensity by blocking and gradually dissolving them. Putting up the Kaliwa Dam is not the best solution despite all the benefits to be gained.

As future working citizens of the Philippines, our lives will also be affected by this project. The money that the Philippines borrowed from China will be paid by us, the future workers. It is questionable because why do we need to pay all these debts if there's no need to build a new dam for our water supply. It all goes back to the question, "Is there a water shortage?" Is there a need for a new water reservoir? Thinking that Kaliwa Dam is the best solution will not be helpful as of the moment. Despite all those people who will benefit from that big project, there will also be a lot of people who will be strongly affected negatively by it.

Maria Angelica Nichole
C. Foronda
Leazel May B. Lagoc
Mika Mari E. Rocamora
Wenden D. Santiago



02 APR 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Gov't cuts water allocation for irrigation from Angat

The National Water Resources Board yesterday implemented lower water allocation for irrigation in Central Luzon from Angat Dam to ensure continuous supply for Metro Manila's domestic water requirements during the dry season.

Starting April 1, water allocation for farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga will be cut down from 40 cubic meters to 35 cms.

NWRB Executive Director Sevilla

David Jr. however assured that the implementation of lower water allocation for agricultural lands will not impede irrigation activities as it is already harvest season.

Meanwhile, water allocation for Metro Manila's water supply remains at 48 cms.

NWRB, an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is in charge of the allocation of water

supply from the Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan to the National Irrigation Administration for the irrigation of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga, and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System for the water requirements of households in Metro Manila.

Earlier, David said the NWRB prioritizes the requirements for domestic water supply for Metro

Manila by providing the maximum allocation from the Angat Dam.

About 96 percent of Metro Manila's domestic requirements are sourced from Angat Dam.

As of yesterday, the water level at Angat Dam remains normal at 192.76 meters but down from 193.14 meters the other day.

Angat Dam's normal high water level during the rainy season is 212 meters. **(Ellalyn V. Ruiz)**



Mt. Apo off limits to trekkers

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY - In a bid to prevent forest fires during summer, Mt. Apo, the country's highest peak, was closed to trekkers starting yesterday.

Last week, the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) ordered the closure of the Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur trail, which covers Digos City, Sta. Cruz and Bansalan.

On March 7, the PAMB closed the North Cotabato trail.

The closure order prohibits trekking, climbing, camping and other activities in the areas.

Mountaineer groups have

agreed to abide by the closure order.

The PAMB said violators face charges under Republic Act 9237 or the Mt. Apo Protected Area Act.

The onset of El Niño can bring warmer temperature and cause forest fires, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Hundreds of hectares of forest on Mt. Apo caught fire in 2016.

The closure order is expected to be lifted once PAGASA declares the end of El Niño in Mindanao.



Mt. Apo trails in Davao del Sur temporarily closed due to El Niño

DAVAO CITY — Starting April 1, visitors would be barred from climbing and camping at Mt. Apo because of the El Niño phenomenon.

The Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB) issued the temporary closure order on March 28 in a bid to prevent possible forest fires during the dry season.

Frank Buenaflor, of the Davao del Sur Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office, said the order on trails

covering Sta. Cruz, Digos, and Bansalan in Davao del Sur, is a preemptive move especially after vast areas of Mt. Apo caught fire in 2016.

As early as March 7, the North Cotabato trails of Mt. Apo have also been closed.

“In order to decrease the risk of fire until Pagasa lifts the declaration of El Niño,” Buenaflor noted.

Mountaineers expressed their support to the temporary closure or-

der.

Jose Abajero, project chair of Lapuk Mountaineer, said this is for the protection of Mt. Apo and encouraged other groups to support the government’s initiative.

“We will just reschedule our climb,” said Tessa Abajero, also a member of Lapuk Mountaineer.

PAMB warned violators of the order will be charged for breach of Republic Act 9237 or Mt. Apo Protected Area Act of 2003. —*Inquirer*



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



8
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 APR 2019

DATE



JOE'S TAKE

Ni Joe Zalzaronga

NGayong panahon na ng tag-init, unti-unti nang napapansin ang labis na pag-init ng hangin at ng kapaligiran. Hindi katak-taka na nauso na naman ang mga malamig na inumin gaya ng mga fruit shake at halo-halo. Napakarami na rin ng mga bumibiyaha patungo sa mga probinsiya upang magbakasyon, lalo na sa mga probinsiyang may magagandang mga dagat. Sa opisyal na pagdeklara ng panahon ng tag-init ay nagpapaalala rin ang PAGASA na maghanda para sa isang ganap na El Niño. Inaasahang matagal mararamdaman ang epekto ng El Niño. Puwede itong umabot ng Agosto 2019. Hihina ngunit hindi mawawala hanggang Disyembre 2019. Isa sa mga paghahandang dapat nating gawin ay ang ukol sa matalino at masinop na paggamit ng koryente at ng tubig.

Bunsod ng pagdating ng tag-init, inaasahang tataas din ang konsumo sa koryente dahil malamang ay mas matagal gagami-

tin ang mga kagamitang de koryente na maaaring makontra sa init ng panahon gaya ng mga bentilador at mga aircon. Dahil din sa summer na nga, bakasyon na rin ng mga estudyante kaya maaaring mas maraming tao ang mamamalagi sa bahay. Mas marami rin ang mga kagamitang maaaring gamitin panlibang gaya ng mga telebisyon, gaming console, kompyuter, at iba pa. Ibig sabihin, tiyak na makadaragdag ito sa konsumo na maaaring dumagdag din sa kabuuang bill na babayaran sa koryente. Upang makaiwas sa mataas na bayarin, kailangang ugaliin ang masinop at matalinong paggamit ng koryente pati na rin ng tubig dahil sa kasalukuyan, patuloy pa rin ang pagbaba ng lebel ng tubig sa mga dam na ating pinagkukuhanan ng supply ng tubig gaya ng Angat Dam at La Mesa Dam na nauna nang umabot sa kritikal na lebel.

Salubungin man tayo ng mataas na demand sa koryente sa mga susunod na buwan, hindi ito nangangahulugan na may krisis na rin sa supply ng koryente gaya

ng sa tubig. Gayunpaman, hinihimok namin ang lahat, hindi lamang ang aming mga customer, na magtipid sa paggamit ng koryente ngayong panahon ng tag-init.

Ngayong darating na Mayo, kasabay ng bakasyon ng mga estudyante, ay nakatandang ganapin ang eleksiyon. Ayon kay I-Care Representative at Vice Chair ng Committee on Energy, Rep. Carlos Roman Uybarreta, dapat maghanda ang mga kooperatiba ng koryente sa mga probinsiya dahil sa inaasahang pagdagsa ng mga turista at sa pansamantalang pag-uwi ng mga estudyante sa kani-kanilang mga probinsiya ngayong bakasyon. Mababawasan ang demand ng koryente sa Maynila ngunit ang kabawangang ito ay lilipat sa mga probinsiya kayat dapat maging tutok ang mga kooperatiba sa pagtugon sa nakaambang paglaki ng demand sa kanilang lugar na nasasakupan.

Isa sa mga pangunahing adbokasiya ng 1st Consumers Alliance for Rural Energy o I-Care Partylist ay ang pagsiguro na ang mga tao sa mga rural area ay may access sa mga pangunahing pangangailangan ng mga

ito gaya ng koryente, tubig, at iba pa. Nilalayon din ng grupo na protektahan ang karapatan ng mga mamamayan sa mga rural area sa bansa. Sa kasalukuyan, apat na ang naipapasa nilang mga panukalang-batas.

Noong nakaraang taon, naisabataas ang ECRF or Electric Cooperatives Emergency and Resiliency Fund Act (RA11039) sa pangunguna ni Uybarreta. Ito ay tungkol sa pagtatabi ng P750 milyon bilang nakaabang na pondo na maaaring gamitin ng mga kooperatiba ng koryente sa restorasyon ng mga masisirang pasilidad ng koryente sa tuwing may kalamidad sa bansa. Isa rin si Uybarreta sa nagsulong ng Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop Act (RA11234) o EVOSS na naisabatas noong ika-8 ng Marso 2019. Layon ng batas na ito na mas mapabilis ang pag-proseso ng mga dokumentong kailangang isumite ukol sa proyektong may kinalaman sa generation, transmission, at distribution ng koryente. Isa pang batas na naisulong ni Uybarreta, kasama ang iba pang mga mambabatas ay ang Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act. Aprubado na ito sa

bicameral committee noong ika-16 ng Enero 2019. Ang pokus naman ng nasabing batas ay ang pagkakaroon ng standard na pamamaraan ukol sa matalino at masinop na paggamit ng koryente sa bansa.

Kasama rin si Uybarreta sa nagsulong ng Murang Kuryente Act (HB1950) na naaprubahan na ng Bicameral Committee noong ika-7 ng Marso at naghihintay na lamang ng pirma ni Pangulong Duterte.

Nawa'y dumami pa ang mga grupong kagaya ng I-Care Partylist na naglalayong mapabuti ang serbisyong ukol sa koryente para sa mga konsyumer. Ngayong panahon ng tag-init ay ugaliin nawa nating lahat ang matalino at masinop na paggamit ng koryente at tubig gaya kung paano natin gagamitin ang ating karapatan sa pagboto sa darating na eleksiyon sa Mayo. Ang ating mga desisyon sa kasalukuyan ang siyang magpapasiya sa ating kinabukasan. Siguraduhin nating ito ay magiging mabuti at mainam para sa ating lahat at mainam para sa mga susunod na henerasyon. Tatlong bagay ang iwasan nating sayangin — tubig, koryente, at ang ating boto.

TULONG-TULONG SA PANAHON NG EL NIÑO AT TAG-INIT



02 APR 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

1,300 land applications awarded to Baguio constituents

By **ZALDY COMANDA**

BAGUIO CITY – A total of 1,300 land applications for alienable and disposable lands were awarded to Baguio constituents, and a total of 942 residential free patent applications were approved and

awarded to actual occupants in the different barangays in the city.

City Councilor Edgar Avila said the city's move was made on the marching orders of Mayor Mauricio Domogan to help settle the city's land problems. Avila is chairman of the Committee on Urban Planning, Lands and Housing, Land Zoning Board of Adjustments and Appeals and City Land Needs and Identification of the Sangguniang Panglusod (SP).

And to comply with these orders, Avila said he filed with the SP a proposal, that was later on adopted as an ordinance, that provides for a moratorium on demolition in public lands which have been occupied for at least 30 years.

The ordinance also allows tax declarations to be the basis for the issuance of building permits.

Ordinance 89-2018 also rationalizes the special nature of lands in Baguio City, where majority of its constituents were not given the opportunity to have the lands they have occupied to be titled under the present Torrens system. They have always been threatened of being declared as illegal settlers, thus, violating the National Building Code of the Philippines.

Oppositors, claimants, prospective

buyers and speculators have repeatedly used a complaint for violation of such law or building without permit as a weapon to dispossess, harass, or even grab possession and ownership over their lands, according to Avila.

The ordinance, which intends to provide measures that limit the impact of the national law to the rights of the people, provides that a person in actual and physical possession of a public land for 30 years or more may get a mayor's status quo order upon the recommendation of the Urban Planning committee chairman, provided that a structure has been built therein and within such period, such person has declared the improvements there for taxation purposes with the Office of the Assessor.

The City Building Official is also authorized to issue building permits to the applicant that possesses the mentioned qualifications. With the ordinance authored by Avila, the approval of an MSO suspends the effects of demolition order issue of the City Anti-squatting Group for 10 years to afford the applicant the last opportunity to perfect his or her claim, application, and/or award into a private right.



SM malls in Bulacan lead Earth Hour 'switch off'

BULAKEÑOS were urged to do their part for the environment as SM Bulacan Malls in Marilao, San Jose del Monte and Baliwag joined millions of businesses and people across the globe in "switching off" for Earth Hour.

The world's largest grassroots movement for the environment used the global theme "#Connect 2Earth," which aims to call for urgent need to care for the Earth's biological diversity.

In the Philippines, World Wide Fund focuses on the issue of single-use plastics and crucial need to save environment's condition.

"SM's celebration of Earth Hour is more than an annual tradition of turning off the lights but also a moment to reflect on what we can do to help save the environment," said SM City Marilao Assistant Mall Manager Don Fiesta.

Paving the way for many conserva-

tion victories, SM Bulacan Malls included a number of activities for the community to take part in.

In SM City Marilao, a series of cleanup activities preceded the celebration with a follow up waterway rehabilitation on April 2019. The mall likewise featured a 10-foot Tree of Life made of recycled metal bars, thousands of LED lights, and repurpose plastic materials during Earth Hour celebration. **Jun David**



EARTH HOUR AT SM SAN MATEO Rizal Gov. Rebecca Ynares (third from left) urges her constituents to support the government's environmental conservation efforts, led the ceremonial switch off for Earth Hour at SM City San Mateo on Saturday, March 30. Featured behind the group is a lantern-inspired wall art made of recycled materials, including used plastic bags, cardboards and driftwood to promote upcycling not only on Earth Hour, but year-round.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

BusinessWorld™

4/5
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 APR 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE



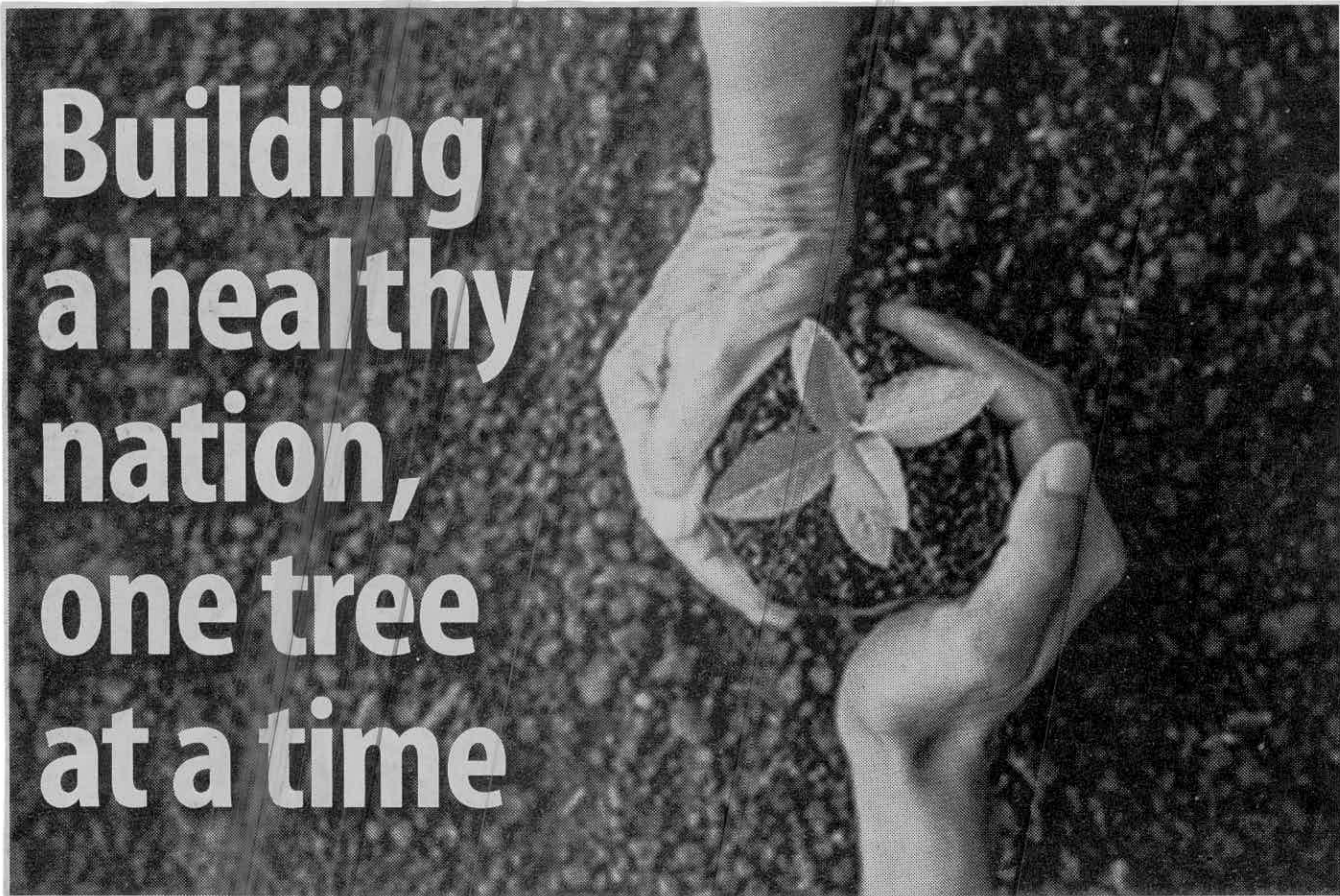
Pawikan hatchlings released

A total of 115 sea turtle hatchlings make their way to the sea last March 29. Aboitiz Power Corp. subsidiary Therma South, Inc. (TSI) said three *pawikan* or sea turtle nests were discovered since December 2018 along the coast of its 300-megawatt Davao Baseload Power Plant in Binugao, Toril, Davao City. TSI named the sea turtle hatchlings "Team Stingray" after Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio's son who celebrated his birthday on the same day.

ABOITIZ POWER CORP



1/2



Building a healthy nation, one tree at a time

There is a law that requires every 'able-bodied' Filipino, 12 years and above, to plant one tree each year.

THERE are many possible ways to build a healthy, sustainable nation, and one of them is helping in the protection and conservation of environment. While this can be a pretty tall order, one of the easiest ways to do it is by planting more trees—or even at least one.

In fact, there is a law that requires every Filipino to plant one tree each year.

According to Section 8 of Republic Act No. 10176, also known as the Arbor Day Act of 2012, "All able-bodied citizens of the Philippines, who are at least 12 years of age, shall be required to plant one tree every year."

Aside from helping "protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology," if every Filipino, from age 12, planted a tree every year, the country can be shielded from calamities while having more than enough supply to meet the demands of the local forest industry.

The Philippine Wood Producers Association, the national association of companies, corporations, partnerships, and individuals involved in forest management, further explains the importance of planting trees in ensuring there is a balance between the needs of the

people and the viability of the forests.

Planting trees helps support ecosystems. Forests are known as the lungs of our planet. These absorb more carbon dioxide and other potentially harmful gasses including sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide from the air, and release oxygen. They also provide habitat and food for animals ensuring the diversity of flora and fauna on our planet.

Trees serve as shields against calamities. Planting more trees, especially in the rural and upland areas of the country, helps minimize the impact of natural disasters, reduces landslides, keeps the ground fertile, and slows down mudflows. These trees can also absorb rain on the mountain slopes, preventing casualties during dangerous typhoons.

It increases biodiversity. Pushing for bills such as the Sustainable Forest Management Act and joining causes

that advocate tree planting can secure natural sustainability for all life forms.

Production of responsibly sourced wood contributes to the country's economic growth. Aside from making a more sustainable Philippines, trees can also help propel our economy forward. From the development of plantations to the harvest of mature trees, the entire process requires manpower, which PWPA asserts will then create jobs and provide more stable and dependable income sources. It will also produce raw materials needed for furniture and building infrastructures that will last, therefore making way for business opportunities locally and internationally.

"Trees really play a vital role in ensuring the well-being of our country" opined PWPA chairman Charlie H. Lu.

He added, "We believe that by taking care of trees and our forest, we can ensure that countless generations of Filipinos can still enjoy the blessings of Mother Nature. We also know that if we take care of our forests, it can help countless Filipinos who depend on the forestry sector and in wood production as their primary source of livelihood."



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Manila Standard

C2
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 APR 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

2/2



Planting more trees minimizes the impact of natural disasters, supports ecosystem, and contributes to the country's economic growth.