

DATE : 08 APR 2019

DAY : Monday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

08 APR 2019

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

Baguio sets tree inventory

By Aldwin Quitasol

BAGUIO CITY – The Baguio City Government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Cordillera will conduct a new joint inventory of the trees, particularly those posing danger to lives and properties in the city.

Baguio City Mayor Maurico Domogan said an inventory is necessary to identify which trees need intervention and what remedial measures can be employed.

The mayor's move was in line with the order of DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu for the rehabilitation of Baguio, which included solving the problem

of the dying Benguet pine trees.

"Recently, our pine trees are plagued by pests and diseases, as well as forest fires, overstepping, erosion, over-maturity and over-population and this has caught the attention of Secretary Cimatu," Domogan noted.

Domogan assigned the City Environment and Parks Management Office the task of investigating and recording dead, sick or strangled trees. However, he also called for the inclusion of personnel from the

DENR-Cordillera Administrative Region to strengthen the inspection and come up with a unified result and recommendation.



THE city government of Baguio has launched an inventory of the city's trees, particularly its trademark pine trees, as part of the effort to rehabilitate the environment of the country's summer capital and avert as well the danger posed by dying trees to lives and properties.

Volunteers

clean up waterways

By **Komfle Manalo**

Nearly 16,000 people from 181 Metro Manila barangays—all volunteers—collected more than 70 tons of solid waste from *esteros* and rivers during the simultaneous cleanup of Manila Bay tributaries on 1 April, which was part of the massive efforts to rehabilitate the heavily polluted bay.

The cleanup is part of the "Battle for Manila Bay" project. "Volunteerism is the most important part of the project," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said, adding he was overwhelmed by the turnout. He said the tributaries account for the bulk of pollution load to the bay.

"We have been overwhelmed with the support we received from the public for the cleanup of Manila Bay tributaries. Indeed, nothing is impossible if we all work together," Cimatu stressed, noting that public participation is crucial to the success of the rehabilitation.

What was notable during the simultaneous event was the improper disposal of solid waste among the communities involved. Under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, local government units are primarily responsible for waste segregation and disposal.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)—through its recently created four field offices in the National Capital Region—will assist Metro Manila localities in implementing Republic Act 9003 to address the problem of solid waste in their waterways.

The cleanup activities were held in 21 impact sites, or those which are heavily polluted, in the river systems of Pasig, Marikina, San Juan, Parañaque, Pateros, Taguig Malabon-Navotas, Tullahan-Tinajeros and Las Piñas-Zapote.

Cimatu made the rounds of the cleanup sites to personally thank the volunteers for their support and inspect the status of the waterways. He was joined by DENR officials, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chairman Danilo Lim.

What was notable during the simultaneous event was the improper disposal of solid waste among the communities involved

In Parañaque, the volunteers were overwhelmed by the mounds of solid waste that practically covered Tripa de Galina and the number of illegal settler families (ISF) who were living right beside the compacted garbage.

A barangay captain was hurt in Manila while overseeing the cleanup of Estero de Magdalena. The Environment chief extolled him for his dedication and support to the rehabilitation efforts.

Cimatu also visited Navotas River where he saw a huge number of ISF residing beside the river. He said ISF were also contributors to the pollution of *esteros*. Phase 2 of the Manila Bay rehabilitation includes the relocation of these families.

In Caloocan City, he lauded officials of barangays along the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System who signed with the DENR a commitment dubbed as "Kasunduan sa Paglilinis ng Tullahan-Tinajeros River System" for the rehabilitation of the river system, which has a current coliform level of 92M mpn (most probable number)/100ml.



1/3



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Daily Tribune

www.DailyTribune.com



08 APR 2019

2/3

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE





STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

17
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

08 APR 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 17

DATE

3/3



THE "Battle of Manila Bay" cleanup has been drawing volunteers by the thousands.





'BATTLE FOR RIVERS AND ESTEROS' KICKS OFF CLEANUP DRIVE IN TAGUIG

EAST Zone concessionaire Manila Water led volunteers from the Ayala Group in the "Battle for the Rivers and Esteros," a campaign spearheaded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that involves the simultaneous cleanup activities of creeks, esterros and tributaries that drain into Manila Bay.

More than 500 employees from the Ayala conglomerate have volunteered to clean Hagonoy creek in Taguig City, one of the many waterways that the DENR targets to revive.

The campaign aims to involve communities and empower them to protect their own waterways.

According to Manila Water President and CEO Ferdinand de la Cruz, the Ayala Group's participation hopes to strengthen the company's commitment in helping the country

restore its precious waterways.

"Manila Water's Toka Toka is our program that aims to clean and revive our waterways through these important four ownable acts: solid waste segregation, desludging every five to seven years, connecting to sewer line and educating the community," he said.

Manila Water Advocacy and Research Department Head Fernando Busuego III said the 12-month cleanup activity is part of Manila Water's Toka Toka campaign, which promotes environmental protection, and seeks to revive the health of rivers and water bodies by reducing pollution.

Toka Toka is the first and only used water movement in the Philippines that encourages individuals and communities to do their share in environmental protection.

"As a pioneering environmental protection

advocate, one of our 'toka' or share is to consistently engage in cleanup activities and educate people on how they can contribute in protecting the environment," Busuego added.

"This is the reason we launched our Toka Toka advocacy program. We encourage communities to put in their respective stakes for cleaner and healthier surroundings."

Since its inception in 2012, the program continues to foster and strengthen partnerships with various national government agencies, local government units and the private sector to further advance the movement.

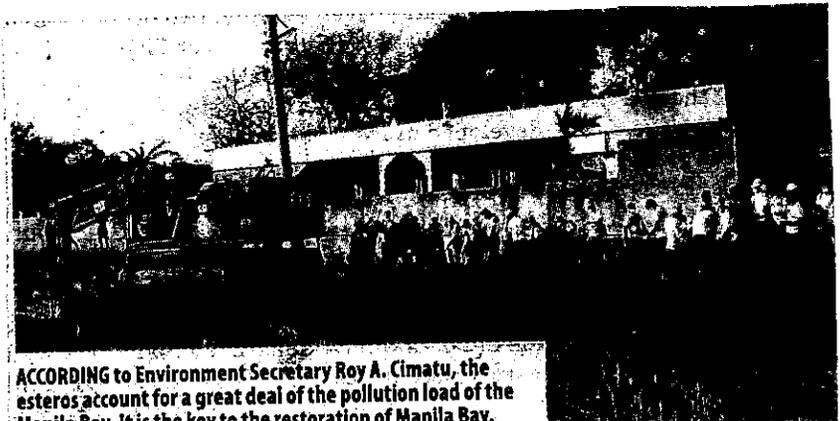
Ayala subsidiary Makati Development Corp. also deployed a loader and three excavators that facilitated in the collection and disposal of waste collected during the cleanup. Besides its employee-volunteers, Manila Water also provided other cleaning implements such as shovels to the local government units of Pateros and Taguig.

Representing DENR Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, Administrator Undersecretary Peter N. Tiangco of National Mapping and Resource Information Authority said that what we are launching today is the battle for the

esteros, which is indispensable in winning the battle for Manila Bay.

"The esterros account for a great deal of the pollution load of Manila Bay. It is key to the restoration of our beloved bay. The esterros have been a long running headache despite many years of our Adopt-an-Estero program, whereby communities and LGUs and business enterprises adopt a specific estero or segments thereof for continuing cleanups, some dating back to 2010," Tiangco explained.

The Battle for Rivers and Esteros includes a series of activities from regular cleanup on garbage and debris, removal of silt by dredging, to introduction of bioremediation, infrastructure improvement and other engineering interventions, such as trash traps and silt curtains.



ACCORDING to Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, the esterros account for a great deal of the pollution load of the Manila Bay. It is the key to the restoration of Manila Bay.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

HATAWA!

D'YARYO NG BAYAN
<http://www.hatawacoblad.com> P10.00

4
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

08 APR 2019

DATE

Utos ng DILG sa barangay officials **Linis estero at ilog posibleng mabalam**

NAGBABALA kamakailan si Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Martin Diño sa barangay officials na hindi nakikilisa sa paglilinis ng mga ilog, estero at kanal sa kanilang nasasakupan, na nanganganib mabalam ang proyekto sa clean and green ng environment ng pamahalaan.

Ito'y matapos ipag-utos ng DILG sa mga barangay official at barangay captain na hulihin ang mga nagtatapon ng basura sa kanal, estero, at ilog upang maipatupad ang clean-up at rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay.

Pero nanganganib umanong mabalam ang proyekto sa environment na clean and green program ng pamahalaan para sa paglilinis ng estero, ilog at kanal sa District 1 sa Quezon City.

Ayon sa barangay official ng District 1 na tumanging magpabanggit ng pangalan, hindi umano nila maisasakatuparan ang proyekto ng

paglilinis sa ilog at estero partikular sa Culliat Creek na nasasakop ng kanilang barangay dahil wala silang pondo para rito dahil hindi napirmahan ni QC District 1 Rep. Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo ang Development plan ng kanilang barangay.

Nabatid sa barangay officials na kailangan umanong dalhin pa ng mga barangay captain sa bahay ni Crisologo ang kanilang development plan project para mapirmahan ng mambabatas upang maipatupad ang kanilang proyekto sa barangay.

Bunsod nito, nababalam umano ang mga proyekto nais nilang ipatupad sa kanilang barangay. Sinabi sa ulat na ilan sa development projects ng naturang mga barangay ngayong 2019 ay clean and green program para sa Sagip Batis o paglilinis ng mga estero at kanal, disaster program na laan para sa mga kalamidad, peace and order project na nangangailangan ng pondo para maipatupad.



Clean and green program sa QC may sagabal

NANGANGANIB umanong mabalam ang Clean and Green program na direktiba ng Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) partikular ang paglilinis ng estero, ilog at kanal sa Quezon City.

Ayon sa barangay official ng District 1 sa QC na tumangging magpabanggit ng pangalan, hindi umano nila maisasakatuparan ang paglilinis sa ilog at estero partikular sa Culiat Creek na nasasakop ng kanilang barangay dahil umano wala silang pondo para dito matapos umano hindi mapirmahan ang development plan ng kanilang barangay.

Nabatid pa na kailangan

umanong dalhin pa ng mga barangay captain sa bahay ng isang opisyal sa lungsod ang kanilang development plan project para mapirmahan at mapondohan.

Hindi naman umano ito magawa ng mga chairman dahil sa pangambang mabahiran ng politika ang kanilang pagpapapirmahalalo na't kandidato ang pipirmang opisyal.

Nauna rito ay inatasan ni DILG Undersecretary Martin Diño ang mga barangay official na hulihin ang mga nagtatapon ng basura sa kanal, estero, ilog na upang maipatupad ang cleanup at rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay.



Bomb nahukay sa Manila Bay

NATAGPUAN ang isang vintage bomb malapit sa U.S. Embassy sa Ermita, Maynila, kamakalawang umaga.

Ayon kay Rodolfo Velasco ng Department of Public Works and Highway, sa kasagsagan ng dredging operation alas-7:30 ay nadiskubre ang bomba.

Agad itong inulat ng mga miyembro ng Manila Bay Task Force sa Manila Police District Explosives and Ordnance Division.

Inilarawan ni MPD EOD officer Holm Fabian ang natagpuan bilang isang 81-mm aluminating round bomb.

Dinala na ang bomba sa Tarlac para sa controlled explosion na isasagawa ng mga otoridad. — *Radio Inquirer*



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

08 APR 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE



A FAMILY spends the weekend at Baseco beach in Tondo, which has been cleared of garbage. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has warned the people against swimming in Manila Bay. (Ali Vicoy)



Manila Bay: Rehabilitation or reclamation

STORY & PHOTO BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

SINCE last year, various government agencies have had their hands full in rehabilitating ecotourism sites, taking the cue from President Duterte's marching order to fix the pollution-challenged Boracay Island, the country's top tourist destination in Aklan.

Three months after the reopening of Boracay on October 26, 2018, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, (DENR) led on January 27 the launch of the "Battle for Manila Bay," an ambitious P47-billion, seven-year program to save Manila Bay from environmental degradation.

The target is to reduce the level of water pollution—particularly the level of coliform bacteria which has reached up to 3 million most probable number per 100 milliliters.

Simultaneously, the government has started to wage similar battles against environmental violators in other tourist beach resorts like Panglao in Bohol, Coron and El Nido Resorts in Palawan, and Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro. Rehabilitation of these resorts is long overdue.

Loudly applauded

WHILE the implementation of the rehabilitation projects appears haphazard, the initiative to enforce stricter environmental laws, particularly the Clean Water Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, was loudly applauded.

Environmental groups welcome such endeavors, albeit with skepticism while keeping their fingers crossed, hoping they will lead to genuine ecotourism that is sustainable and ecological.

In Boracay, the campaign zeroed in on addressing the direct discharge of untreated wastewater from business establishments to the bodies of water, targeting first and foremost the resorts, hotels and restaurants; and other tourism-related establishments of Boracay.

Violators were slapped with fines and were compelled to connect to proper sewer lines, if not put up their own sewage treatment plants.

Environmental compliance certificates (ECCs) were canceled and many business establishments, which failed to comply with environmental laws, were not allowed to resume operations.

In Manila Bay, the DENR, led by the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Environmental Management Bureau, has started issuing notices of violations and slapping cease-and-desist orders.

Communities: Victims or culprits? ENVIRONMENTAL advocacy

groups, however, question the failure of DENR, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Tourism in making the rehabilitation inclusive and participatory, thus, leaving behind in the dark the communities in Boracay.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) questions the DENR's decision allowing corporations to adopt Boracay's wetlands instead of tapping the local communities whose income and livelihood was severely affected.

Pamalakaya Chairman Fernando Hicap lamented that companies—such as Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., Energy Development Corp., San Miguel Corp. and JG Summit Holdings Inc.—were allowed by Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to "revive" six of the nine wetlands of Boracay through the department's "adopt a wetland" program.

"The cleanup drive of Boracay is actually a farce. Small and medium structures were shut down and some residents were displaced as a precursor to the entry of big businesses and investors to further privatize the island," Hicap said in an interview last week at the sideline of a national conference held in Manila.

In a previous interview with DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, he said the communities were left out because of their negligence, if not abuse, of their own environment that led to Boracay's deterioration and was tagged by President Duterte as the country's biggest cesspool.



P-2

Manila Bay: Rehabilitation or reclamation

What about the moratorium?

AT the recent Second People's Summit on the Impacts of Reclamation held in Intramuros, Manila, organizers and around 200 participants, who are mostly leaders of various community-based peoples organizations, echoed the call of marine scientists and environmental experts for the need to protect and conserve the country's coastal and marine ecosystems.

These include the historic Manila Bay, the subject of massive rehabilitation efforts by the Duterte administration, and destructive land reclamation projects, as well.

The environmental experts and scientists called for a nationwide moratorium on land reclamation, or dump-and-fill projects.

They nixed the Duterte administration's policy to pursue massive development projects that will require land reclamation to expand land territories in coastal areas. They said a comprehensive study on their impact to the environment, the people and their way of life should be first looked into.

Organized by the People's Network for the Integrity of Coastal Habitats and Ecosystem (People's NICHE), which advocates for ecological restoration as an alternative to land reclamation, the conference participants believe that a moratorium to avert the impending ecological crisis expected from the land reclamation policy under the Duterte administration is a must.

At least 1.24 million people might significantly be impacted by reclamation projects covering 39,414 hectares of coastal and marine landscapes across the country.

Violation of environment laws

OCEANA Philippines, an ocean conservation advocacy group and one of the organizers of the event, expressed alarm by what it described as an "apparent disregard of our progressive laws" to protect and conserve coastal and marine ecosystems.

Environmental lawyer Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice-president of Oceana Philippines, said the country has awesome environmental laws, which are sadly being violated to pave the way for various development projects at the expense of the marine and coastal environment and the way of life of people living in coastal communities.

"We are alarmed by the apparent disregard of our progressive laws for the protection of vastly threatened natural life support systems, and allowing these reclamation projects to pave our mangroves, seagrass beds and other marine habitats," Ramos said in a media statement during the conference.

"Dumping and filling of critical marine support systems in Manila Bay are not only violating our laws, they are depriving our artisanal fisherfolk of their living

and sustenance, as well as fisheries and biodiversity, which are heavily impacted," she added.

Under the Local Government Code, or Republic Act 7160, a local government unit's boundaries may only be substantially altered by law enacted by Congress.

But Ramos said local government units (LGUs) "tend to expand their territory further out into the sea; substantially changing [their] territorial boundaries."

She explained that there are rigid requirements to change or alter territorial boundaries, including a national law enacted for the purpose, and a majority of votes for its approval cast in a plebiscite.

Environmental impact assessment

PROF. Jay Batongbacal, a maritime law expert, is calling for a massive environmental impact assessment of all land reclamation projects.

In his presentation, Batongbacal said land reclamation projects are very destructive, and will have adverse economic and environmental impacts that can endanger the lives of tens of thousands of people living in coastal communities.

"Before coming up with a project, there should be an environmental impact assessment. I am calling for a massive environmental impact assessment of all land reclamation projects in Manila Bay," Batongbacal, who gave an overview of the land reclamation project and their impact, told the BUSINESSMIRROR at an interview at the event's sideline.

Eviction sans proper relocation?

ON Manila Bay, Pamalakaya and Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE) raised the issue of the government paving the way for multibillion-peso development projects, 22 of which were allegedly done deals.

They said the projects will result in massive land reclamation, resulting in the relocation of over 200,000 informal settler families, mostly small fishermen.

They were afraid informal settler families will again be relocated in far-flung areas where no job or employment opportunity await them, no water or electricity, or proper transportation to ensure them and their children a better living condition.

The DENR, along with the DILG, is working with various national government agencies, including the shelter agencies under the umbrella Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Presidential Urban Poor Commission, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and concerned LGUs for the relocation of informal settler families away from Manila Bay, or the rivers and esteros, which water fall out to the bay.

Pamalakaya and Kalikasan-PNE are calling for a moratorium on land reclamation, claiming there was no study done yet on the potential adverse economic and environmental impact of reclamation.

Last month, around 200 leaders and members of organizations of fishermen, urban poor, women and environmental groups launched the Manila Baywatch, a watchdog alliance that aims to monitor the government's rehabilitation and reclamation programs.

"Genuine rehabilitation of Manila Bay should be building livable housing for waterway and coastal communities, not resulting in eviction," said Leon Dulce of Kalikasan-PNE and spokesman of Manila Baywatch.

"Manila Bay's waters should be restored fit for fisherfolk, not for destructive land reclamation. We aim to use people power and science to ensure that Manila Bay's rehabilitation follows the highest environmental and human-rights standards," Dulce added.



P-1

Duterte eyeing another agency on reclamation

By BERNADETTE D. NICOLAS @BNicolasBM



PRESIDENT Duterte may constitute another agency on reclamation, which he said would be managed by people with unquestionable character.

43

Number of reclamation projects lined up for Manila Bay, covering 32,000 hectares

"Ang kinuha ko lang 'yung Reclamation Authority kasi matagal at nag-i-squabble 'yan sila diyan sa pera. Tinanggal ko. Nilagay ko sa opisina pero hindi gumagalaw. Wala akong [I only got the Reclamation Authority because it was

CONTINUED ON A2

He made the announcement in a speech on Saturday night at the 25th National Federation of the Motorcycle Clubs of the Philippines

(NFMCP) Annual Convention at the Iloilo Convention Center.

The President had signed in February an executive order (EO)

placing the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) under his office in a bid to fast-track the land-reclamation process.

slow and it had long been wracked by squabbles arising from money. I took it out. I placed it under my office, but it has not been moving. I have no....]... I never act on it," Duterte said.

He continued: "I would maybe constitute another agency [manned by] people with unquestionable character so that it would be clean."

It is not yet clear what would happen to the PRA.

The earlier issuance of the EO on the transfer of PRA came amid the pending land-reclamation projects in Manila Bay, now also the subject of a massive rehabilitation program led by the national government.

Critics have pointed out that the Manila Bay rehabilitation is a prelude to clearing the way for pending reclamation projects.

Under Executive Order 74, the PRA was placed "under the direct control and supervision" of the OP, while the power of the President to approve all reclamation projects shall be delegated to the PRA Governing Board.

The EO added: "Such delegation, however, shall not be construed as diminishing the President's authority to modify, amend or nullify the action of the PRA Governing Board."

The PRA was previously with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

While Malacañang defended the EO as a means to streamline the services of government agencies, the Palace was also quick to dismiss that the EO was meant to

favor anyone or any group.

'Suspend bay rehab'

THE Makabayan bloc has already filed a resolution urging the government to suspend the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, saying this could be a prelude to the 43 reclamation projects covering more than 32,000 hectares in the bay under the President's "Build, Build, Build" program.

According to the lawmakers, the 265-hectare Pasay Harbor City joint venture involving Davao-based businessman Dennis Uy is included in the list of reclamation projects.

Uy was one of the main campaign contributors of President Duterte.

The EO also applies to all reclamation projects, including those initiated by local government units and all other agencies, government-owned and -controlled corporations or any government entity allowed under existing laws to reclaim land, for which there are no contracts or agreements yet executed between the government entity concerned and a private-sector proponent prior to the effectivity of the said EO.

In November, it was reported that Manila Mayor Joseph E. Estrada and Pasay City Mayor Antonino Calixto signed a memorandum of agreement to pursue together with "utmost effort to cooperate with each other and extend mutual assistance" to their separate partnerships with private groups to reclaim huge swathes of the Manila Bay



08 APR 2019

DATE

P-2

Duterte eyeing another agency on reclamation

to develop a valuable coastal real estate, as well as generate employment and other economic opportunities in the two premier coastal cities in Metro Manila.

Meanwhile, the Palace EO stated that pursuant to its mandate to integrate, direct and coordinate all reclamation projects for and on behalf of the national government, the PRA is also mandated to seek advisory opinions from relevant national government agencies on any proposed reclamation projects.

These agencies include the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), the DENR and the Department of Finance. The Neda Board approved reclamation projects prior to the issuance of the EO.

No reclamation project shall also be approved by the PRA without the required Area Clearance and Environmental Compliance Certificate to be issued by the DENR.

All reclamation projects shall also undergo competitive public bidding and shall be evaluated by PRA based on their cumulative impacts rather than on a specific project basis.

The PRA governing board is also enjoined to allot at least 5 percent of its net earnings to develop its capability and expertise to reclaim land, including the modernization of its dredging and reclamation technologies.

The PRA shall also craft and implement a five-year development plan to transform PRA into a premier reclamation authority.



Rody to reactivate reclamation body

By Nat Mariano

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte says the Philippine Reclamation Authority remains inoperative, and that he might create a separate agency for land reclamation that will only be manned by people with "unquestionable character."

He made the statement two months after he transferred the agency to his control and supervision.

In a speech during a motorcycle clubs' convention in Iloilo City on Saturday, Duterte said he avoids government trans-

actions that involve large amounts of money, but that he took exception in the case of PRA.

"I only took the PRA because they've been squabbling about money for too long. I removed it. I put it in my office,

but it's not moving. I never act on it," the President said.

"It would maybe constitute another agency [manned by] people with unquestionable character just to be clean."

In his Executive Order 74, Duterte moved the PRA to the Office of the President, delegating to the PRA Governing Board the power of the President to approve reclamation projects and other purposes, aiming to rationalize operations for a sustainable resource development.

The PRA used to approve reclamation projects on behalf of the chief executive, but Duterte's new directive repealed the two previous executive orders that placed

the PRA under the control of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Economic and Development Authority.

"The PRA shall be under the control and supervision of the OP, while the power of the President to approve all reclamation projects shall be delegated to the PRA Governing Board," the EO says.

"Such delegation, however, shall not be construed as diminishing the President's authority to modify, amend or nullify the action of the PRA Governing Board."

The Palace had previously said Duterte's order was meant to streamline the PRA's services and make the agency "more efficient."



More heads to roll

By Kristina Maralit

Stressing that there is no place for corruption in government, President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday bared more officials' heads are on the chopping block this week.

The Chief Executive made this disclosure during the 25th Annual Convention of the National Federation of Motorcycle Clubs of the Philippines in Puerto Princesa, Palawan over the weekend.

He lamented the sluggish process citizens have to endure in different government offices to conduct business. It has to stop, he said.

Turn to page 2

DUTERTE SETS FIRING SPREE

He lamented the sluggish process citizens have to endure in different government offices to conduct business

Although he did not mention any name nor an agency, *Daily Tribune* sources claimed the President could be referring to Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary John Castricones

From page 1

"Every table in government, there's greed and there's always a monkey wrench. Every table in the process, there's corruption," the President said.

"That's why when I get back (to Malacanang) maybe (Monday), I'll be firing a lot of people, simply for corruption," the President stressed.

Mr. Duterte also mentioned his frustration over delays in land conversion applications.

Every table in the process, there's corruption.

"The authority to convert is given to a certain person. And then you'll make the people go back-and-forth for two years. To me that is corruption. Nothing else. The meaning of that is you want money," he stated.

Although he did not mention any name nor an agency, *Daily Tribune* sources claimed the President could be referring to Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary John Castricones.

Castricones is spearheading

the administration's efforts to streamline the conversion of agricultural lands for commercial use in 30 days from the usual process that takes a two-to-three-year period.

The President extended the warning to other government workers in all national agencies. He reiterated that the Philippines will not be a fully developed and progressive country if corruption and concerns about law and order persist.

Since the start of his term, the Chief Executive has sacked 151 officials and employees from government service over corruption allegations and other violations.

In 2018, the President has fired some 22 government and military personnel for reported corrupt practices.

For the first three months of 2019 (meanwhile, some 48 public workers have been given the boot.

'Corrupt to the core'

The Chief Executive, as he campaigned for the administration's senatorial bets in Malabon City last week, described the Philippines as

"corrupt to the core."

In the Executive Branch, Mr. Duterte assured corruption is non-existent as he has "direct control" over the Cabinet.

"Me, no documents pass through me. Contracts regarding the trains, MRT, LRT reclamation, they don't reach me. They start and end with the Cabinet. You cannot fault me for even a peso. I do not allow transactions, documents to land on my table," he said.

"I have direct control over the Cabinet members. Because I'm supposed to lead but I cannot be the Defense Secretary all the time, the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) Secretary. I function through Cabinet members. I have no problem. You have no problem up here. There is no corruption," he assured.

Mr. Duterte, however, can only exercise supervision when it comes to elected officials and trust they "do what is right."

"You ask me whether I can control corruption in all government agencies. I will tell you this: the Philippines is corrupt to the core. It has

different forms whether in the city hall or at the national level," he declared.

"Those below—the elected officials—I have no control (over them), just supervision. This is where massive corruption happens," he added, citing the issuance of business permits as an example of a "milking cow" of corrupt local officials.

Since the start of his term, the Chief Executive has sacked 151 officials and employees from government service over corruption allegations and other violations.

With this, he made an appeal to the public to help him rid his administration of graft and corruption and urged them to directly report to him if they've been a victim of any government official or employee asking for grease money during transactions.

"Do not be a victim. If you are asked for money, go to Malacanang, report it to me. I will tell the presidential guards to let you in," Mr. Duterte said.



WORLD BANK PROJECT

STUDY OF PLASTICS PROBLEM IN PASIG RIVER PUSHED

By **Jhesset O. Enano**
@JhessetEnanoINQ

The World Bank Group is in talks with the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission for an in-depth look into the plastic pollution problem that hounds Pasig River and its tributaries as part of efforts to curb marine plastics and support proper waste management.

In an interview, World Bank senior environmental engineer Gerardo Parco said the group recently reached an agreement with the commission to survey the 27-kilometer stretch of the waterway that cuts across Metro Manila.

Although the deal had yet to be formally signed, Parco said they already received a grant from Korean Green Growth Trust Fund, a partnership between the World Bank Group and the Korean government that was focused on green projects.

He refused, however, to disclose the exact amount of the grant.

During a recent conference on marine plastics hosted by the World Bank and Norwegian Embassy in Manila, senior environmental specialist Katelijn van den Berg said the research would include surveys on the sources and impact of plastic waste in at least five areas located along the river.

The study would also determine the types of most prevalent plastics, as well as

the entry points of these pollutants in the waterways. Van Den Berg said the research would also look into the brands of discharged plastics.

Parco said technologies such as remote satellites and drones would be used to assess the plastic waste.

Two- to three-year project

"The data that would be gathered will then be used for policy dialogue with the government," he said, noting that the project was expected to begin before the year-end and would last for two to three years.

According to a 2017 study by researchers from the United States and the Netherlands, Pasig River dumps over 63,000 tons of plastics—equivalent to the weight of over 10,000 elephants—into the ocean every year.

This makes the river the world's second worst contributor of ocean plastic, relative to its drainage area.

Plastic pollution remains one of the country's perennial environmental problems due to its high dependence on single-use plastics for food packaging and hygienic products.

A waste assessment report by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives in March reveals that Filipinos throw almost 164 million pieces of plastic sachets daily. Yearly, over 59 billion pieces of sachets are used in the country. INQ



SA mga nagdaang araw at buwan, nakita natin ang ginawang rehabilitasyon sa Boracay Island nang dahil sa mga naglipanang basura sa nasabing lugar. Kami-kailan lamang ay nagsagawa rin ang ating pamahalaan ng paglilinis sa Manila Bay. Ito ay sa pagtutulungan ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno. Ito ay nagpapakita lamang na upang mapangalagaan ang kapaligiran ay kinakailangan ang pagkakaisa ng pamahalaan at mamamayan. Kinakailangan ding bigyan ng ngipin ang mga batas na may layuning proteksiyunan ang mga karapatan ng mamamayan laban sa polusyon. Ito ngayon ang malinaw na ginagawa ng kasalukuyang pamahalaan.

Malinaw na nakasaad sa ating *Saligang-Batas*, partikular sa *Article II, Section 16*, ang sumusunod na probisyon:

"SEC. 16. Dapat pangalagaan at isulong ng estado ang karapatan ng sambayanan sa timbang at kanais-nais na ekolodyi nang naaayon sa aluy-oy at tugma ng kalikasan."

Makikita rito ang pagpapahalaga ng estado sa karapatan ng mga Pilipino sa malinis na kapaligiran. Sa

paglipas ng panahon, napakaraming sakuna ang nangyari hindi lamang dito sa Pilipinas kundi sa iba't ibang bahagi ng mundo. Sinasabing ang mga sakunaang ito ay dulot ng pagkasira ng kalikasan at kapaligiran. Sa kabila ng kampanya laban sa pagkakalat ng basura, marami pa rin ang hindi tumatalima rito. Maraming batas ang naipasa ng Kongreso upang bigyan ng proteksiyon ang kapaligiran at isakatuparan ang polisiya ng estado na bigyan ng proteksiyon at isulong ang karapatan ng mamamayan sa malinis na kapaligiran.

Nagsagawa rin ang Korte Suprema ng mga alituntunin para sa mga kasong isinampa nang dahil mayroong paglabag ng mga batas na pumoprotekta laban sa tuluyang pagkasira ng kalikasan at kapaligiran. Ito ay ang *A.M. No. 09-6-8-SC* na may titulong "*The Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases*".

Sa anumang paglabag sa mga itinakda ng batas para sa proteksiyon ng kalikasan at kapaligiran, maaaring maghain ng petisyon sa husgado upang makakuha ng *Writ of Kalikasan* sa ilalim ng *Rule 7 ng A.M. No. 09-6-8-SC*.



KARAPATAN NG MAMAMAYAN SA MALINIS NA KAPALIGIRAN

Ito ay maaaring isampa sa Korte Suprema o sa anumang sangay ng *Court of Appeals* ng alinman sa *people's organization* o *non-governmental organization (NGO)* o ng iba pang may pampublikong interes na kinikilala ng ahensiya ng gobyerno. Ang petisyon ay ihahain sa ngalan ng mamamayan na ang karapatan na magkaroon ng malusog na ekolohiya ay malalabag o nangangamb na malabag dahil sa kagagawan ng pampublikong opisyal o pribadong indibidwal na maaaring magdulot ng malaking kasiraan ng kapaligiran at makaapekto sa buhay, kalusugan at ari-arian ng dalawa (2) o tatlong (3) siyudad o probinsiya.

Ang *Writ of Kalikasan* ay legal na remedyo sa ilalim ng batas ng Pilipinas kung saan ang

karapatan ng mamamayan sa "*balanced and healthful ecology*" (timbang at malusog na ekolohiya) ay nalalabag dahil sa gawain ng pampublikong opisyal, empleyado o pribadong indibidwal o entidad. Ang mandato ng *Writ of Kalikasan* ay mula sa *Article II, Section 16* ng ating *Saligang-Batas* sa nabanggit na dapat pangalagaan at isulong ng estado ang karapatan ng sambayanan sa timbang at kanais-nais na ekolodyi nang naaayon sa aluy-oy at tugma ng kalikasan".

Ang paghahain ng petisyon para makakuha ng *Writ of Kalikasan* ay hindi nangangahulugang hindi na maaaring papanagutin ang mga taong lumabag ng batas-kalikasan sa kasong kriminal o sibil para makahingi ng danyos.

Kapag mayroong kag-

ayat na pangangailangan at ang naghahabla ay makararanas ng *grave injustice* at *irreparable injury*, siya ay maaaring humiling sa kanyang petisyon na mabigyan ng *Temporary Environmental Protection Order (TEPO)*.

Sa patuloy na pagkasira ng ating kapaligiran, hindi lamang ito magdudulot ng mga sakuna kung hindi, ito ay magiging sanhi rin ng maraming sakit sa mamamayan. Ang mga usok na likha ng mga sasakyan ay maaaring maging sanhi ng *asthma* o *pneumonia*. Ang patuloy na pagkakalat ng basura ay magdudulot sa pagbara ng mga kanal at magiging sanhi ng pagbaha. Kaya naman kaakibat ng ating mga karapatan sa malinis at malusog na kapaligiran ay ang ating mga responsibilidad bilang mamamayan na panatilihin maayos ang ating kapaligiran. Gawin din natin ang ating mga obligasyon tulad na lamang sa paggamit ng *recycled products*, pagtitipid sa tubig, enerhiya o kuryente at pagtatapon ng basura sa tamang tapunan. Ito ay mga maliliit na bagay subalit, makatutulong nang malaki sa atin na mapanatiling malinis ang ating kapaligiran.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

B5
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

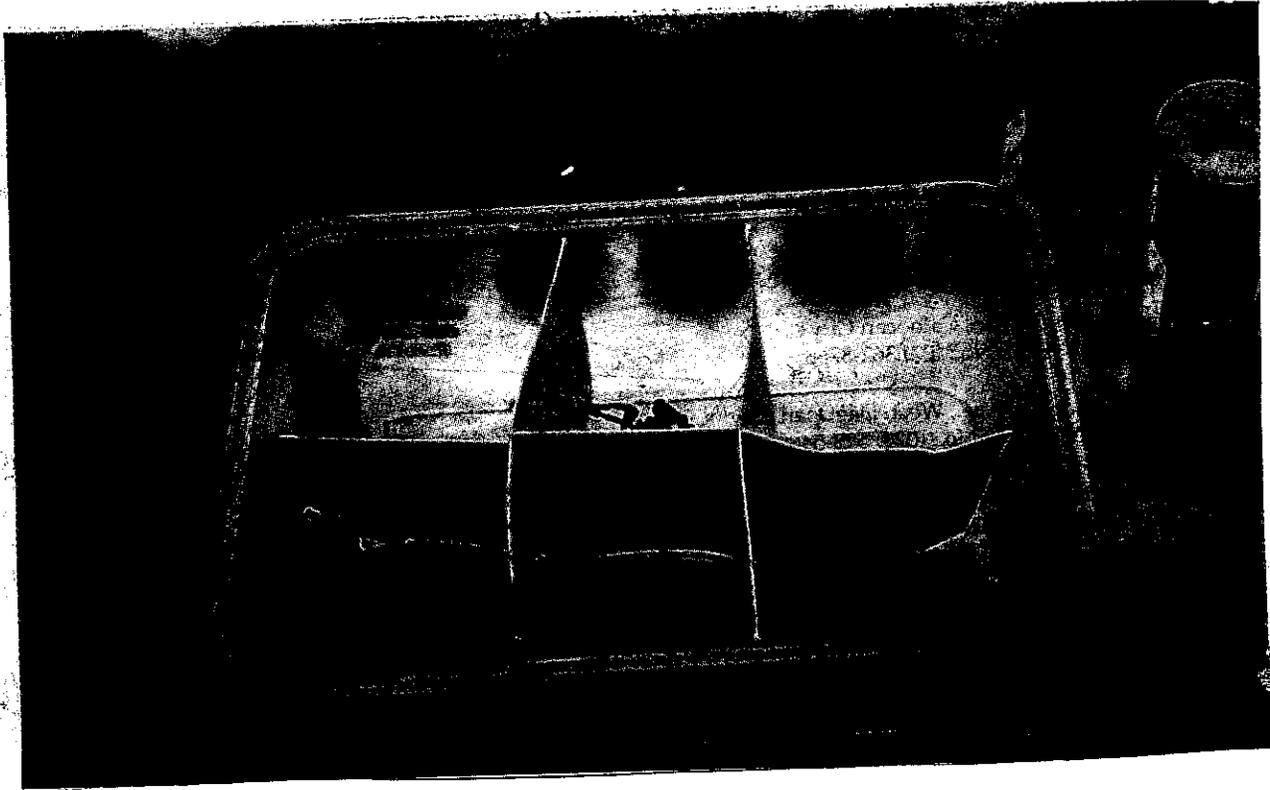
CARTOON

08 APR 2019

DATE

IMPORTED ENDANGERED TARANTULAS SEIZED

Tarantulas inside plastic containers are shown at the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Metropolitan Manila on April 3. Philippine Customs District Collector Carmelita Talusan said in a statement that 757 live tarantulas, with an estimated value of P310,000 (about \$6,000), were seized by customs agents at Manila's airport on April 1. The endangered wildlife species were found concealed in gift-wrapped oatmeal and cookie boxes and was shipped from Poland. AP/AARON FAVILA





STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

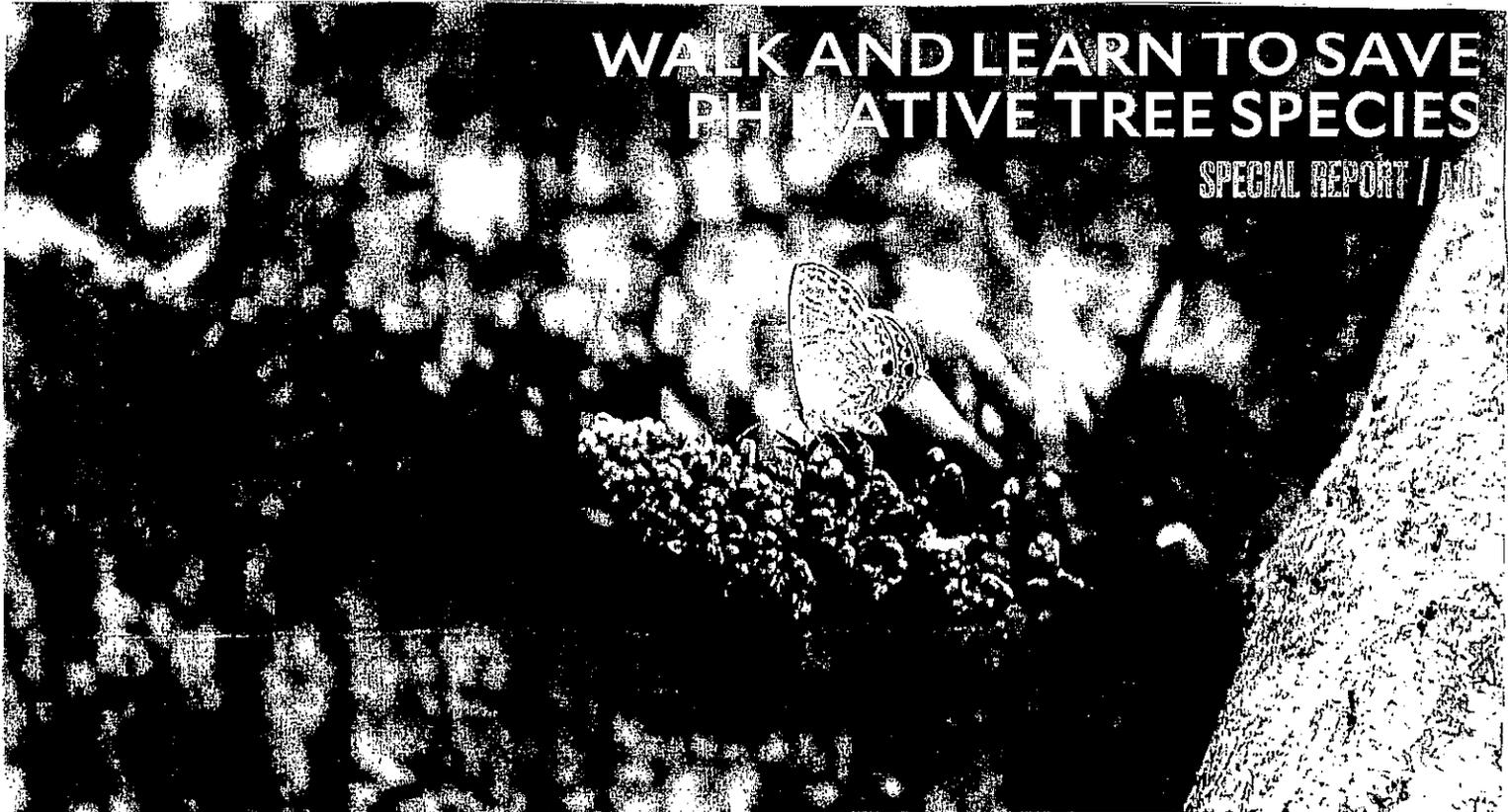
08 APR 2019

1/8

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE



**WALK AND LEARN TO SAVE
PH NATIVE TREE SPECIES**

SPECIAL REPORT / AID

ENDEMIC TO PH A relative of the endemic species of jade vine has adapted to summer. Usually green, the species boasts of vibrant lilac buds that will eventually bloom. It is among the endemic and threatened species of Philippine flora found during tree walks around the University of the Philippines IB-EDC Threatened Species Arboretum in Diliman. —JAM STA. ROSA



By Inna Christine Cabel
@innacabelINO

Ramon Bandong awaits visitors at the entrance of the University of the Philippines' Institute of Biology (UP IB), where he is the resident plant expert.

His trusty garden shears keep his hands busy as he prepares for another Thursday tour of one of UP Diliman's best-kept secrets—a forest he has tended for more than 30 years.

Hidden behind the institute's white walls is a rarity in the bustling metropolis: the 1-hectare UP IB-Energy Development Corp. Threatened Species Arboretum. It is home to more than 96 premium tree species, mostly endangered, as well as five of the 12 forest formations in the country.

"There are species that are under threat, their population in the wild decreasing. At this point, they need a little help or intervention in the form of arboretums to house them," says David Ples, a site guide and research assistant at the IB.

Indigenous trees are at the center of the arboretum. Native species are naturally bound to a place and coexist with the ecosystem.

"These are plants that are ours, that [represent] the Philippines. If we don't recognize their importance now, who will?" says Abigail Garrino, also a site guide and research assistant.

Green thumb

A low path leads Bandong and his group to a fernery, where *Selaginella*, usually green in color, immediately catches everyone's attention. Sunlight turns the blue-green spike moss iridescent—a quite uncommon feat in nature, because the color blue is rare and hard to produce biologically.

Diliman was named after a fern that used to dominate the area, but when Bandong first came to UP, he saw no sign of it. Thanks to his green thumb, however, he was able to revive the renowned Diliman fern in the arboretum.

Now the visitors troop to a bridge as quaint as in a fairy tale, and wonder what awaits them behind the brown tree trunks.

Dry mahogany leaves crunch beneath their feet as they move toward the first area, a clump of towering trees, the tropical lowland evergreen rainforest.

Mahogany, commonly used in tree-planting activities, is actually an invasive foreign species that ideally should not be propagated in the Philippines. Tagged as allelopathic, it releases chemicals that change the composition of the soil for other naturally occurring plants and overcomes them. Birds shun it.

Garrino cites the importance of native trees: "After joining numerous tree-planting

activities, I have learned that all the efforts I have put in may become futile if the wrong kinds of plants [are used]. Worse, they could have a negative impact on the environment."

Native blossoms

In the second area, forest over limestone, are many endemic plants found only in the Philippines.

"If Japan has cherry blossoms, the Philippines has the Philippine teak," says Garrino. "A whole canopy would be covered in blossoms since they're at the top of the tree."

Philippine teak, an endemic tree that bears vibrant purple flowers and rough leaves, is commonly found in the province of Batangas.

At the lower montane rainforest, Bandong introduces the *katmon*, a native ornamental tree. A toddler in the group takes a bite of its tiny fruit and puckers up at the taste. The *katmon* fruit can be used as a souring agent for the famous Filipino dish *sinigang*.

"Do you know this plant?" Bandong animatedly asks the

group as they reach the leaf-carpeted semi-evergreen rainforest. He points to a familiar tree, the one kids love to climb. "Mango!" someone exclaims. He nods in agreement but says quickly: "The difference is, this one, the *puhutan*, is native."

"The [Indian] mangoes we are so proud of, we say that they're grown here, but the species is not native," Ples explains, adding:

"We have plenty of native species that can potentially become globally competitive [but] ... we Filipinos don't pay attention to our native trees."

Biological warfare

Bandong points to a plant hidden in a corner by a creek, inching away from it as he speaks: "That is the *lipang kalabaw*. Its sting is so itchy that even carabaos run away from it."

He recounts how the plant helped the UP IB catch a burglar in the act, the itchy rash giving him away. "I always say it's for biological warfare," Bandong jokes.

Dandelion-like cotton balls from a kapok tree overhead land like dust on the visitors. It

looks like snow in summer, but sadly, the tree is not indigenous. A similar one, ironically named *malabulak* (cotton-like), is native to the Philippines but lesser known. It can be used as stuffing for pillows and other items.

Circling the arboretum, the visitors are led to a shortcut often used by UP students. Bandong tells them to come closer as he holds up a small fig and cross-sections it, exposing numerous tiny wasps inside. Gasps fill the air as the visitors examine the fig tree, dubbed *tangisang bayawak*. Fig trees are special because they are pollinated by a specific fig wasp.

Endangered

The single point of Mount Makiling is much more biologically diverse than the whole continent of America, the site guides for the tour point out.

"Plant diversity in the Philippines is very rich," says Lillian Rodriguez, assistant professor at the IB. "We are an archipelago, so we became isolated. Our plants are different from our neighboring countries and we have different endemic species."

2/4



TITLE :

PAGE 1/

DATE

According to the late botanist Leonard Co's Digital Flora, there are 9,432 native species of vascular plants in the Philippines. But despite being a biodiversity hot spot, much of our native plants remains unexplored.

"The problem is you can't study these plants because you're also scared for your life," Rodriguez says, citing the communist insurgency in Mindanao as one of the hindrances to the conduct of research. "[Authorities] automatically assume you're a member of the NPA (New People's Army), and there are threats coming from both sides."

The tour ends on a solemn note, as everyone gathers around the memorial of Co, one of the greats of Philippine botany. His knowledge of Philippine flora remains unmatched to this day, and his advocacy for native plants lives on in an organization he founded, the Philippine Native Plants Conservation Society Inc.

Co was killed by the military in 2010 while doing fieldwork in Kananga, Leyte, in the middle of a forest doing what he loved. He was wrongfully Red-tagged by the very forces supposed to protect him from danger.

Here in the Philippines, people who study plants, who

study native trees and endangered species, they themselves are endangered," Ples says.

Threats

Another threat to native plants is rapid deforestation.

"We need to know what trees are native in our country so that we can plant those to restore our forests," Rodriguez says.

Environmental damage from unsustainable development and urbanization also endangers native species, many of which have yet to be discovered.

"It's a race against time to ignite our collective consciousness of the unique flora around us," says Ples.

For Garrino, another important part of fieldwork is the exchange of ideas with the locals. "When we come down from the mountain, they'll borrow the plant identification guide ... I watch them with amazement and nostalgia as I remember the days when I first fell in love with plants," she says.

Much of the knowledge of native Philippine plants comes from our ancestors, Rodriguez says. Indigenous peoples who live in remote areas lack access to modern medical care and are thus the main sources of information on how to use native plants for healing.

"We have to take care of and propagate this knowledge, or it will be gone," she says.

Plants give so much but ask for so little, according to Ples. The source of almost everything we need, plant compounds are usually studied for their groundbreaking potential and application in medicine and other fields.

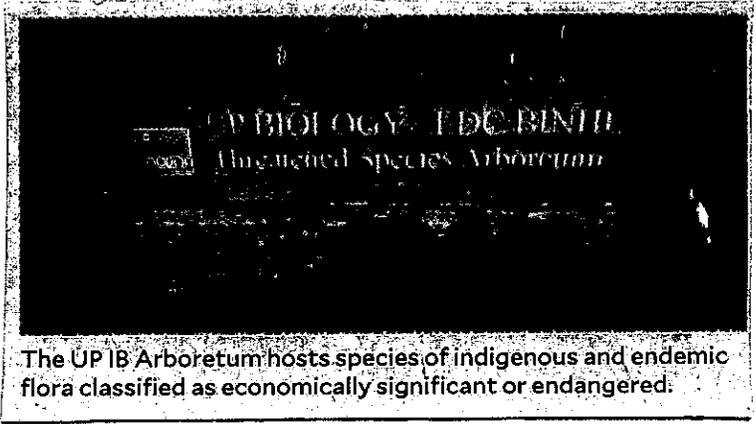
Smell the flowers

The walking tour, #Gubat-SaSyudad (Forest in the City), sponsored by the IB and the Asian Institute of Tourism, is a way for advocates to spark interest and showcase the vibrancy of native biodiversity.

"Diversity is beautiful. And when you see something beautiful, there's the urge to get to know more about it, and to get everyone else to see it," Ples says.

"People won't protect what they don't care about, and they can't care about what they don't know. Sometimes they just forget. So we make time for them to quite literally stop and smell the flowers." INQ

3/4



The UP IB Arboretum hosts species of indigenous and endemic flora classified as economically significant or endangered.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER



UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

08 APR 2019

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

4/4



Plant enthusiasts learn to save two forest species

TREE WALK Plant enthusiasts embark on a tree walk at the UP IB-EDC Binhi Threatened Species Arboretum to learn more about native and endemic plants of the country from resident experts like Ramon Bandong (bottom right). Fig trees like the “tangisang bayawak” (top) are indigenous to the Philippines. —PHOTOS BY JAM STA. ROSA





MWSS expects Wawa dam

proponent to withdraw case

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) expects the withdrawal of a case filed against them by one of the proponents of the Wawa Bulk Water Supply project otherwise "there will be no deal."

MWSS Administrator Reynaldo Velasco stressed this condition as the board is set to begin deliberating the water supply project proposal by port magnate Enrique Razon and businessman Oscar Violago, in partnership with Manila Water Company Inc. The Razon-led group is set to present their Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project proposal to the MWSS Board next week.

"On April 16, the TWG [Technical Working Group] will present the Wawa Dam project to MWSS," Velasco said. "By that time the restraining order filed against us before the Court of Appeals should have already been withdrawn otherwise there will be no deal."

Velasco expects that by then, Violago, who filed the restraining order, has already withdrawn the case he filed against the water regulator over his water rights in the Wawa watershed.

Razon's Prime Infra, through a partnership with Violago's San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders and Developers Group (SLRBD), signed a memorandum of understanding with Manila Water two weeks ago to cooperate on the possible development of the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project.

Violago, who is involved in the construction of hydropower plants, began proposing to convert Wawa Watershed in Montalban, Rizal into a dam in the early 1990s.

In 1993, he claimed he obtained the

water rights to develop the Wawa Dam Project but MWSS and the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) still won't allow him to push through with it. Hence, he sued for a restraining order.

He even claimed that Manila Water "wants to grab" the project from him.

In October last year, MWSS took a second look at Violago proposal but this time, it will be done with his newly-tapped partner, Razon, the owner of International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI) and Bloomberry Resorts Corp.

Located at the Wawa catchment area traversing the municipality of Rodriguez and city of Antipolo in Rizal province, Wawa Dam has a planned capacity of over 500 million liters per day (mld).

Water experts have long cited Wawa as the best potential water supply source for Metro Manila.

Compared to Laguna Lake and other similar water supply options, it does not require an expensive treatment technology like reverse osmosis. At its capacity, it can serve more than 500,000 households in the MWSS franchise area. It is strategically located to serve the expansion areas of Manila Water.

The agreement between Prime Infra and Manila Water paved the way for the formation of a technical team that will conduct a technical study on the Wawa Dam project.

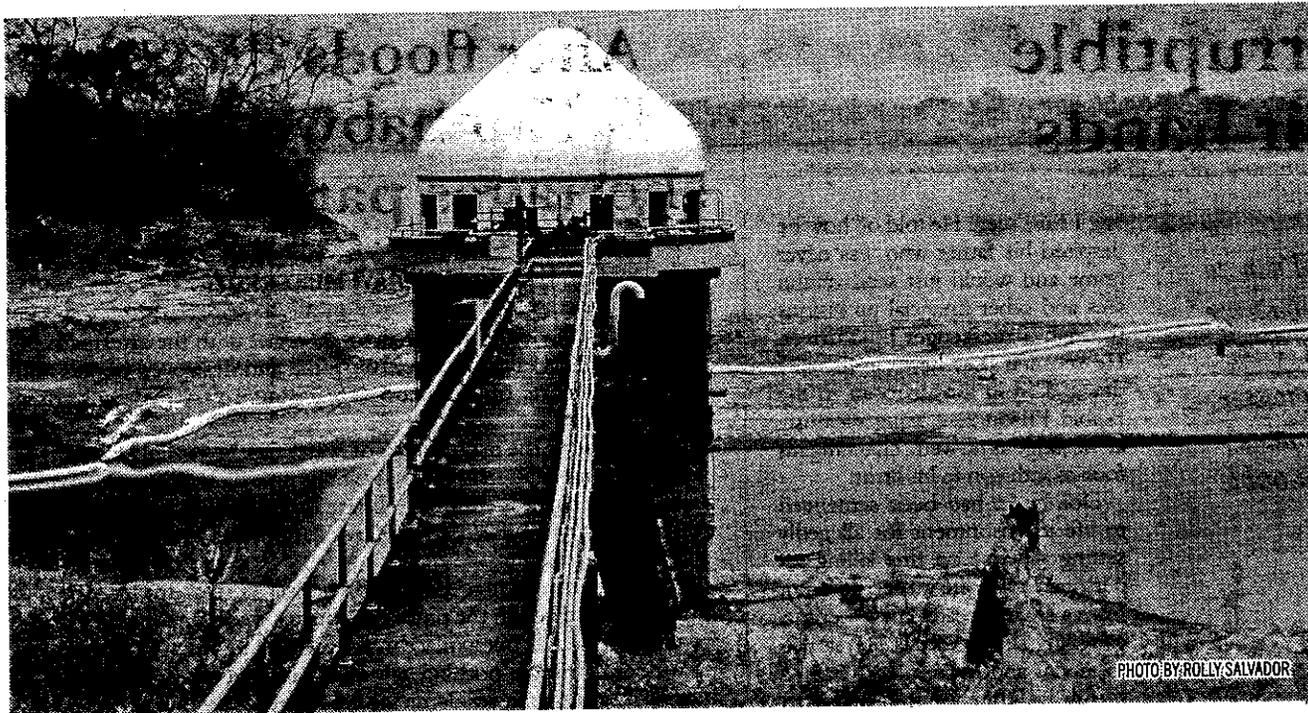
Talks are ongoing between Prime Infra and Manila Water to

→ start the project at the soonest possible time, especially considering the current water crisis.

"The proximity and water source quality of the Wawa catchment area will allow us to deliver first water no later than 2022. Because of the scale and life cycle cost of large dams, the public can

be assured that we will deliver it in a cost-effective manner," Prime Infra President Guillaume Lucci said.

Manila Water is now in hot water for its implementation of low to no water supply interruption, affecting 1.2 million of its customers in its east zone concession area.



Nearly dry. Water level at La Mesa dam has consistently gone south due to lack of rain and the hot weather.

PHOTO BY ROLLY SALVADOR

Angat Dam water level down

BY ANGELA LOPEZ DE LEON

WATER reserve at Angat Dam in Bulacan further dropped in the past 24 hours, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said yesterday.

At 6 a.m. yesterday, the water level in Angat stood at 190.21 meters, 29 centimeters lower from 190.50 meters on Saturday morning.

Angat's water level has dropped consistently since last month due to lack of rain and extreme heat.

Hydrologist Jason Bausa yesterday said they expect Angat to reach its critical water level of 180 meters between the "last week of April and early week of May."

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

Aside from supplying more than 90 percent of Metro Manila's water needs, Angat provides water for the irrigation requirements of thousands of hectares of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga. A part of the dam's water supply

is also used to generate electricity for Luzon.

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

La Mesa, meanwhile, maintained its water level in the last 24 hours.

From Saturday morning to 6 a.m. yesterday, Bausa said the dam's water level was at 68.50 meters, the lowest water elevation in La Mesa's record so far.

The La Mesa Dam has breached its critical level of 69 meters last

March 10.

Residents of Metro Manila and parts of Rizal have been affected by water interruption due to the dwindling water level in La Mesa.

Bausa said they expect the water reserves in Angat and La Mesa dams to continue to decline in the "coming days or until the wet or rainy season sets in between late May and mid-June."

Bausa said that the water reserve in Ipo Dam has maintained its 101-meter level yesterday morning, still above its critical water level of 97 meters.



Go backs proposed Water Department

Former Special Assistant to the President and now senatorial candidate Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go on Saturday backed the proposal for the creation of a Department of Water, which President Rodrigo Duterte himself supported, to ensure adequate supply of clean and potable water for home use as well as for irrigation.

That is one of the things I'm looking out for, to be able to help by pushing for a Department of Water.

Go bared his position as he returned to Quezon province anew, conducting a motorcade that passed along the towns of Lopez and Gumaca, where he later attended a "Serbisong Tunay at Natural" rally organized by Congresswoman Helen Tan, at the Gumaca covered court.

The former SAP expressed his gratitude for the people and residents of the province for the warm welcome he had received, reminiscent of his previous visit to Gumaca in November last year when he graced the inauguration of the Southern Quezon Convention Center.

Gumaca is part of the 4th District of Quezon, a cluster of municipalities located in the southernmost part of the province and adjacent to Camarines provinces in Bicol region. But Go said he does not mind the

distance as long as he could get the chance to talk to the people to hear their concerns.

The province of Quezon has adopted Go as its son, being one of the provinces of CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) that declared Go as an adopted son of the region back in February this year.

Go echoed President Duterte's support for the proposal creating an agency that would solely address the needs of Filipinos when it comes to water supply after being told the people of Gumaca and other parts of Quezon are suffering from lack of potable water.

The province of Quezon has adopted Go as its son.

"That is one of the things I'm looking out for, to be able to help by pushing for a Department of Water as NEDA proposed," he said. "Maybe its high time we have one that will assure we'll have adequate supply not only in Manila but in the countryside as well."

According to Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo, President Duterte is in favor of the proposal to form a separate department for water-related concerns, believing it would prevent a repeat of the water service

interruption experienced recently by parts of Metro Manila and Rizal province.

Panelo said the creation of a water department was one of the topics discussed during the 36th Cabinet meeting last April in Malacañang.

Go also urged the Local Water Utilities Administration to look into the water problems that many municipalities are experiencing in the country. He added that if elected to the Senate, he would also help find solution to the problem.

Go also on Saturday assured local officials of Iloilo that they can count on his help especially on programs for the benefit of Ilonggos and the development of Western Visayas.

He made the commitment in his meeting with local officials of the province of Iloilo at Richmond Hotel before he accompanied President Rodrigo Duterte to the 25th National Federation of the Motorcycle Club of the Philippines National Convention at the Iloilo Convention Center.

Go told the local officials that when President Duterte assumed the highest office in the land, the former Davao Mayor has put behind him the politics involved in the 2016 presidential election and so the province of Iloilo would be treated the same way as the rest of the provinces in the country. **CRP**

DECISION
2019





Bong Go seeks to address rural water problems, medical needs

FORMER Special Assistant to the President and 2019 senatorial candidate Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go backed proposal for the creation of a Department of Water, which President Rodrigo Duterte himself supported, to ensure adequate supply of clean and potable waters for home

use as well as for irrigation of farmlands in the country.

Go bared his position as he returned to Quezon province anew, conducting a motorcade that passed along the towns of Lopez and Gumaca, where he later attended a "Serbisyon Tunay at Natural" rally organized by Congresswoman Helen Tan at the Gumaca

covered court.

The former SAP expressed his gratitude to the people and residents of the province for the warm welcome he had received, reminiscent of his previous visit to Gumaca in November last year when he graced the inauguration of the Southern Quezon Convention Center.

Turn to Page 12.

BONG From Page 5

"Maraming salamat sa mga taga-(Gumaca) Quezon at sa iba pang munisipyong nandito. Pagbaba ko pa lang kanina dun sa Lopez po ay napakainit ng pagtanggap doon sa downtown area hanggang dito sa Gumaca. Nakakatuwa naman po na kahit na medyo malayo po itong lugar na ito ay talagang mainit, yung pagtanggap nila sa akin," Go said in an interview.

Gumaca is part of the 4th District of Quezon, a cluster of municipalities

located in the southernmost part of the province and adjacent to Camarines provinces in Bicol region. But Go said he does not mind the distance as long as he could get the chance to talk to the people to hear their concerns.

The province of Quezon has adopted Go as its son, being one of the provinces of CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) that declared Go as an adopted son of the region back in February this year.

Go echoed President Duterte's support for the proposal creating an

agency that would solely address the needs of Filipinos when it comes to water supply after being told the people of Gumaca and other parts of Quezon are suffering from lack of potable water.

"Isa po iyan sa aking titingnan at sisilipin pagdating ng panahon. Gusto ko pong makatulong. Meron pong mga proposal si (NEDA) Secretary (Ernesto) Pernia na magkaroong ng Department of Water," he said. "Siguro it's high time na po na magkaroon tayo ng departamento na nakatutok sa tubig kasi hindi

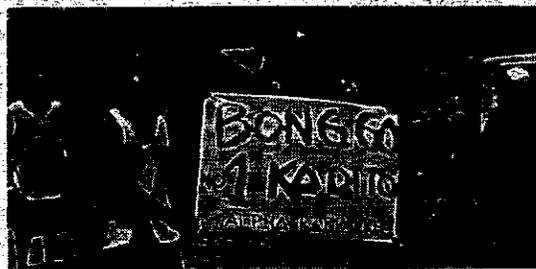
nagkakaroon ng problema sa tubig, lalong-lalo na po dito sa malalayong lugar kasi kulang pa po ang mga pasilidad o mga negosyanteng nag-iinvest po ng negosyo na nagsu-supply ng tubig," he added.

According to Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo, President Duterte is in favor of the proposal to form a separate department for water-related concerns, believing it would prevent a repeat of the water service interruption experienced recently by parts of Metro Manila and Bicol province.

ation of a water department was one of the topics discussed during the 36th Cabinet meeting last April 1, 2019 in Malacanang.

Go also urged the Local Water Utilities Administration to look into the water problems that many municipalities are experiencing in the country. He added that if elected to the Senate, he would also help find solution to the problem.

"Ako rin, pagdating ng panahon ay isa po iyan sa aking magiging prayoridad. Serbisyo kaagad, mahilis na serbisyo para sa kanya tap." Go said.



Earlier, Go also called for the expansion of the existing irrigation system to mitigate the negative effects of the perennial drought the country experiences.

"Isa po ako sa milapitan niya, noon para po sa isang kagad itong

Universal Health Care and it will complement the Malasakit Center," Go said. Among others, Go is battling for a law to establish Malasakit Center in more areas of the country and allow the program to continue even after the Duterte administration.



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPOORTADO NI BONG GO

INIHAYAG ni dating Special Assistant to the President at 2019 senatorial candidate Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go na suportado niya ang panukalang paglikha ng Department of Water na titiyak sa pagkakaroon ng malinis at sapat na potable waters sa bawat tahanan, gayundin para sa mga irigasyon ng mga sakahan sa bansa.

Sinabi ito ni Go sa kanyang pagbabala sa lalawigan ng Quezon kung saan siya nagsagawa ng motorcade sa mga bayan ng Lopez at Gumaca bago dumalo sa "Serbisong Tunay at Natural" rally na inorganisa ni Congresswoman Helen Tan sa Gumaca-covered court.

Lubos na nagpasalamat si Go sa mamamayan ng probinsya sa mainit na pagtanggap sa kanya.

Una siyang dumalaw sa Gumaca noong Nobyembre

matapos niyang pangunahin ang inaugurasyon ng Southern Quezon Convention Center.

"Maraming salamat sa mga taga-(Gumaca) Quezon at sa iba pang munisipyong nandito. Pagbaba ko pa lang kanina dun sa Lopez po ay napakinat ng pagtanggap doon sa downtown area hanggang dito sa Gumaca. Nakakatuwa naman po na kahit na medyo malayo po, itong lugar na ito ay talagang mainit yung pagtanggap nila sa akin," ani Go.

Matatandaan na ang Quezon bilang isa sa lalawigan na bumubuo sa CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon) ay idineklara si Go bilang kanilang "adopted son" noong Pebrero.

Sa kanyang talumpati, sinabi ni Go na suportado niya ang paghahais ni President Duterte na magkaroon ng isang ahensya na tututok sa pangangailangan sa tubig ng mga Filipi-

no. Nabatid-kasi niya na ang Gumaca at Iian pang bahagi ng Quezon ay kinakapos sa supply ng potable water.

Sinabi ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo na pabor si President Duterte na lumikha ng hiwalay na departamento na tututok sa water-related concerns upang hindi na maulit ang water service interruption na nararanasan sa Metro Manila at Rizal province.

Ayon kay Panelo, ang paglikha ng water department ay isa sa mga isyung inalakay sa 36th Cabinet meeting noong April 1 sa Malacanang.

Hintling din ni Go sa Local Water Utilities Administration na alamin ang nangyayaring problema sa supply sa tubig sa maraming munisipalidad.

Ani Go, kung siya ay mahalal sa Senado, tutulong siya sa paghahanap ng solusyon sa nasabing problema. **K JOSE**



Tuesday, April 9, 2019

The Manila Times

10
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

FEATURE
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

08 APR 2019

DATE

Recto seeks probe on sand, gravel quarrying

SENATE President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto has urged the government to review existing policies on sand and gravel quarrying, transport and sale amid the global shortage of sand and rising local demand for construction materials.

The senator added he intends to seek an inquiry into the sand extraction attempt of a Chinese-manned dredging ship off the coast of Lobo, Batangas, and "if this incident is happening in other areas as well."

"There are many provinces in the country that are sand and gravel poor. The reason why home construction cost increases was because these were being shipped from one province to another," Recto said.

"Many government road projects have been delayed by the lack of gravel and aggregates. Our housing shortage is six million units. These can't be wiped out without sand," he said.

Also, about 15,000 kilometers of farm roads remain unpaved and require gravel to be paved. The domestic construction industry is also valued at P2.4 trillion a year and is dependent on sand, gravel and aggregates. "This is the big picture," Recto said.

"Sand is in high demand worldwide. According to the United Nations, sand and gravel account for 85 percent of everything mined worldwide annually. And China, which accounts for half of the global demand, is like a huge sand-and-gravel suction machine," he said.

Recto added that the high demand for sand here and worldwide had given birth to "sand mafia" in many parts of the globe, "and possibly, there are local groups here which are trafficking that sellable commodity."

"Sand and gravel does not get

much attention unlike gold and nickel. And many people think there is an abundant supply of sand and gravel. But that belief is wrong. These are not infinite materials," he said partly in Filipino.

Global gravel extraction, he said, was at a volume twice than what all rivers on earth could yield. Also, Vietnam's domestic demand for sand exceeds its total reserves.

"Many beaches in other countries have been stripped bare of sand. Strip mining also happens in coastal areas. That should not happen here. We should have an inventory and better policy on these resources. We can start with 'no export' policy," Recto said.

He said the Senate probe into the "poaching or export of sand and other landfill materials" should cover not only the reported sand dredging in Batangas, "but similar cases in other parts of the country."

"Have we become a land reclamation material supplier? Are we exporting our sand? If our mountains have been flattened and transported ship by ship to reclaim islands, some of which are within our territory, then that is land transfer of the worst kind," Recto said.

He added that if reports were true that the Chinese ship off the coast of Lobo was dredging sand for use in the building of Hong Kong airport's third runway, "then it is our second contribution to the project, the first being the P700 million that Filipino travelers pay a year for the expansion of the Hong Kong airport."

"It is in the fine print of a round-trip plane ticket to Hong Kong. It is in the ticket. You pay 90 HK dollars as Hong Kong airport construction fee," Recto said.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO



A greener Philippines with Green Tax



Jeffrey Galang Salazar

DEBIT CREDIT

PHILIPPINE Clean Air Act of 1999, Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, and Clean Water Act of 2004 are some of the environmental laws enacted to preserve the country's natural resources and to balance environmental protection and economic development. It is evident that the Duterte administration is considering this balance with the rehabilitation of Boracay Island and ongoing cleanup drive of Manila Bay.

Green Tax also termed as ecotax, environmental tax, carbon tax and pollution tax is levied on consumers or industries that directly or indirectly inflict damage to the environment. Revenues collected through Green Tax are utilized to fund projects and activities to offset the negative impact on environment brought about by these industries.

The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion law imposes a higher excise tax on automobiles, petroleum products, coal and cigarettes. Clearly, these increases in taxes would be able to contribute in the promotion of environmental protection and encouragement of the use of renewable energy sources.

To further expand the efforts of the government to raise revenues to finance its environmental projects and efforts, it's about time that a Green Tax be introduced in the Philippine taxation system. The following are some of the industries that can be subjected to a Green Tax:

Plastic products are one of the greatest pollutants due to improper disposal. There is also rampant usage of plastic sachets for shampoo and powdered drink that remain as environmental waste. To compel manufacturers of these products to innovate and produce reusable or eco-friendly packaging, a Green Tax must be imposed on industries engaged in the manufacture or usage of plastic bags, sachet container, plastic tubes, Styrofoam, plastic straws and other plastic related products. These firms can be taxed based on the volume of production or usage.

Green Tax can also be charged to manufacturers of wooden-based products such as furniture, paper and tissues, so as to be able to generate government revenues for the conservation of forests and trees.

Motor vehicles that use fuel resulting in the emission of harmful smoke or carbon monoxide must be subjected to Green Tax. The amount of Green Tax can depend on the engine size of the vehicle.

Electronic gadgets and appliances contain harmful toxic chemicals such as lead, cadmium and toxic flame-retardants. Manufacturers and sellers of these products must be subjected to Green Tax and must be

Green Tax also termed as ecotax, environmental tax, carbon tax and pollution tax is levied on consumers or industries that directly or indirectly inflict damage to the environment. Revenues collected through Green Tax are utilized to fund projects and activities to offset the negative impact on environment brought about by these industries.

required to provide facilities where their customers can dispose products for discarding.

Green Tax can be incorporated with excise or "sin" taxes on tobacco-based products. Increasing the price of these products with higher taxes may discourage consumers to patronize them and to promote health and welfare. Further, residues from cigarette butts scattered in the streets will also be reduced.

Other neighboring countries in Asia have been resorting to taxation as a mode to control the impact of pollution and preservation of its natural resources. China has introduced an Environmental Protection Tax law effective 2018 and Singapore legislated its Carbon Tax effective 2019. These countries can be the benchmark of the Philippines in the enactment of its Green Tax legislation.

In pursuing a Green Tax law, our legislators must avoid the issue of double taxation issues on the overlap of the Green tax with the existing excise or sin taxes.

Appeal to our honorable legislators, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, academicians and various environmental groups to work together and consider the institution of Green Tax in the Philippines not only for revenue generations but to preserve our natural and irreplaceable resources.

This column accepts contributions from accountants, especially articles that are of interest to the accountancy profession, in particular, and to the business community, in general. These can be e-mailed to boa.secretariat@gmail.com.

Jeffrey Galang Salazar is a Certified Public Accountant and a Master in Business Administration degree holder. He is a PRC-BOA accredited public practitioner and professor.