

DATE : 03 MAY 2019

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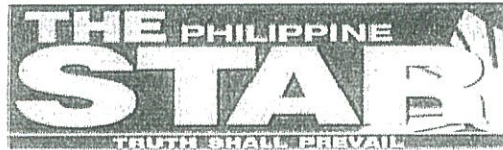
# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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# Cloud seeding set as Angat level dips further

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

**Cloud-seeding operations will begin next week as the water level in Angat Dam, Metro Manila's main water source, has dipped further below critical as El Niño continues to persist in the country.**

National Water Resources Board (NWRB) executive director Seville David Jr. said cloud seeding has been set on May 6.

"As per MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System), we will start next week. Now is the best time to do it because our main concern is the timing on the seedable clouds," David told **THE STAR**.

Even before Angat Dam reached critical level, MWSS and NWRB suggested conducting cloud seeding but the quality of the clouds would not permit it.

Latest update showed Angat Dam elevation at 177.96 meters, which is below the 180-meter minimum operating water level.

This prompted the NWRB to tweak its earlier plan of cutting down allocation for irrigation.

"Starting the second week of May, we will suspend allocation for irrigation," David said.

NWRB's original plan was to allocate 10 cubic meters per second (CMS) for irrigation for the month.

"Instead of the 10 CMS every day for the whole month, we will instead allocate 20 CMS for 15 days until May 15,"

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## Cloud From Page 1

David said.

"After that, no more allocation for irrigation until such time Angat is able to recover and reach above 180 meters again," he added.

The prevailing Angat Operations Rule states that when the water level in the dam reaches below 180 meters, water releases shall be made on the following order of priority: municipal use, irrigation use and river maintenance.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, for his part, said NWRB's move will not impact the farm sector.

"By this time, it's either farmers have harvested already or still in the maturity

stage. If they return the allocation by June or July, it will just be in time for the wet season," Piñol said Thursday.

The lowest water elevation this year is also expected at 173.13 meters by end-May but will slowly return to normal in June with the onset of the rainy season.

State weather forecaster Lanie Bitagon said the early rains in May are not the result of cloud seeding, but clarified this does not indicate the start of the rainy season.

"Normally, we declare the rainy season during the last week of May or the early part of June but because a weak El Niño is affecting the country, it might

get delayed," Bitagon said.

She pointed out the heavy rains experienced in some parts of the country yesterday, including in Metro Manila, were isolated thunderstorms.

Metro Manila residents are advised to conserve water to reduce the water demand from Angat and prevent the rapid decline of water level and contribute to its recovery.

Located in Barangay San Lorenzo (Hilltop) in Norzagaray, Bulacan, Angat Dam supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs and powers the Angat hydroelectric power plant.

The 131-meter high dam impounds water from the Angat River that subsequently created the Angat Lake.

- With Rhodina Villanueva



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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Second round of audit

**Gov't to go after big mining**

**firms anew**

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

**S**ome of the big mining companies who already passed the first round of government-led mining audit will not be off the hook in the second round of mining audit happening this year.

In fact, the forthcoming audit, which is expected to start in a few weeks, is mostly going to be about them.

Environment Undersecretary for Mining Concerns Analiza Rebueta-Teh said that as much as 17 mining companies will be reviewed in the second batch of Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) audit. Of this, 12 mining compa-

"The target is to start within the year and should take six months to complete," Teh said in a text message.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Finance (DOF) are expected to release P10 million each to carry the review.

A DENR official said that it's the availability of budget that's "holding the continuation" of the audit.

"On our end, MGB [Mines and Geosciences Bureau] is going to fund it and they are still processing it. As per NEDA [National Economic and Development Authority], they said DOF already has a budget but **►B-7**

nies already passed the audit carried by former Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez in 2016.

Based on the list obtained by Business Bulletin, the mining companies to be reviewed in the second round of audit include Philex Mining Corporation, Agata Mining Ventures, Inc., Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation, SR Metals, Inc., Apex Mining Company, Cagdianao Mining Corporation, and Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corporation.

Other mining firms to be reviewed, which also passed the Lopez-led audit three years ago, are Century Peak Corporation - Rapid City Nickel and

Casiguran Nickel Projects, Philsaga Mining Corporation, Pacific Nickel Philippines, Inc., Greenstone Resources Corporation., and Taganito Mining Corporation.

Aside from these firms, MICC will also review the operations of Platinum Group Metals Corporation, Filminera Resources Corporation, FCF Minerals Corporation, TechIron Resources, Inc., and Tribal Mining Corporation, Inc.

Teh said the MICC, co-chaired by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, is yet to come up with a date as to when to start the audit, but it should be within this year.

**Gov't to...**

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they are also still processing it," the official said over a phone interview.

There are currently 48 metallic mines operating in the country, 30 of which are nickel, eight are gold, three are copper mines, three are chromite mines, and the remaining four are iron mines.

Twenty-six of these companies faced multiple,

overlapping reviews over the past years, starting with the suspension and closure orders imposed to them by Lopez.

To see whether the orders of Lopez are credible, MICC had to conduct the first round of "objective fact-finding and science-based review" on all these 26 firms, while DENR had to resolve the motion for reconsideration (MRs) filed to them by 13 miners who tried to dispute their closure and suspension orders.

Under this first round of MICC review, all 26 firms failed to score 'acceptable' in the mine audit. They either need minor and major reforms or should be closed down in order to have an 'acceptable' operation, the result showed.

For the second round of review, MICC is eyeing to commission the same team of experts following their outputs on the review of the environmental, economic, social, legal and technical aspects of the first batch of mining firms.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
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## Fishers group: Thriving reefs one reason to save Manila Bay

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

A local fisherfolk group cited the recent discovery of thriving coral reefs as another reason to protect Manila Bay from massive reclamation projects.

"It is crystal clear that Manila Bay is alive and well; it is still the number one source of livelihood for hundreds of thousands of small fisherfolk in the provinces of Cavite, Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, and the National Capital Region (NCR)," Pamabansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) national chair Fernando Hicap said.

Hicap, a fisherman in Rosario, Cavite, said that despite the declining fish catch due to years of environmental degradation, Manila Bay still provides livelihood to the coastal towns of Cavite.

Pamalakaya said reclamation projects in Bacoor, Cavite, alone covers 2,276 hectares.

In Rosario, Cavite, proposed reclamation projects cover a 2,900 ha.

The fisherfolk group said the reclamation projects threaten to displace at least 26,000

coastal families from the towns of Bacoor, Noveleta, Kawit, Rosario, and Cavite City.

Based on the research of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, 72 percent of estimated reef area is found in Cavite.

"While study shows that majority of the coral reefs is situated in Cavite, thousands of hectares of reclamation projects, on the other hand, are also found in the province. This means thousands of hectares of fishing grounds, mangrove forests, coral reefs, and seagrasses will be destroyed to pave way for private businesses and infrastructures," Hicap said.

"There should be no room for any reclamation project not only in Cavite but in the entire waters of Manila Bay to preserve its diminishing fish species and threatened coral reefs," he added.

Pamalakaya urged DENR to protect Manila Bay by disapproving the environmental compliance certificate or ECC and area clearance of these projects, which are both crucial requirements for a reclamation project to proceed, Hicap also said.



## DILG to file raps vs 1,000 'negligent' barangay chiefs

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) will issue show cause orders against some 1,000 barangay captains who have defied orders to strictly implement environmental laws for the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay watershed area.

Under Memorandum Circular 2019-09, the DILG Secretary Eduardo Año has ordered 178 local government units and 5,714 barangays linked to the Manila Bay to conduct weekly clean-up activities.

However, Undersecretary for barangay affairs Martin

Diño there are still "hard-headed" barangay officials who refuse to comply and would not submit weekly accomplishment reports.

"Around 1,000 barangay captains of the 5,714 barangays remain to be indifferent to our cause, making a complete mockery of our overall

campaign by continuously disregarding these high-level orders for the rehabilitation of the bay," he said.

Diño warned the officials they will file charges against the local officials before the Office of the Ombudsman for gross negligence in not enforcing provisions of Repub-

lic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

According to Diño, these barangays are situated in Bulacan, Bataan and Pampanga in Central Luzon; Rizal, Laguna and Cavite in Region 4-A and Metro Manila.

Diño warned the barangay officials they could suffer the same fate as Malay, Aklan Mayor Cicero Cawaling, whom the Ombudsman dismissed for grave misconduct and other offenses that led to the environmental degradation of Boracay Island.

- Emmanuel Tupas



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
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# 1,000 barangays

## in hot water

### DILG cites their failure to comply with Manila Bay clean-up drive

By **CHITO A. CHAVEZ**

**H**eads are expected to roll as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) is zeroing in on 1,000

of the 5,714 barangays who have defied orders to strictly enforce environmental laws in their respective turfs along the Manila Bay Watershed Area.

In a serious bid to rehabilitate the Manila Bay Watershed Area, DILG

Undersecretary for Barangay Operations Martin Diño said cases will be filed against erring barangay chairmen before the Office of the Ombudsman who will fail to explicitly provide any justifiable reason for their non-compliance

with the DILG order.

In a press conference on Thursday, Martin Diño vowed to issue show-cause orders to the defiant barangay chairmen, saying these 1,000 villages comprise the initial batch of erring

barangays.

Through DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2019-09, the department directed 178 local government units and 5,714 barangays along the Manila Bay Watershed Area to conduct week-

## 1,000 barangays in...

◀1

ly clean-up drives in compliance with the order of President Duterte.

But a fuming Diño lashed out the 1,000 barangay chairmen who failed to submit the required weekly reports as directed by the DILG.

Diño accused rogue barangay officials in Metro Manila of allegedly earning "big bucks" with the higher volume of garbage since this translates to numerous trips for hauling services that enrich their "pockets".

He said that local officials responsible for the cleanliness of the Manila Bay include those in Metro Manila, Region 3 (Central Luzon), and Region 4-A (Calabarzon).

Diño said DILG field personnel assigned at the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Project regularly submit reports to verify if all the barangay chairmen in the area are compliant.

Meanwhile, he said that the DILG is routinely assessing the bid of the National Housing Authority (NHA) in providing relocation sites for in-

formal settlers.

The DILG official said that relocating the informal settlers living along rivers, esteros, and other tributaries connected to the Manila Bay is very vital, citing that this is one of the main sources of pollution in the bay area.

To quell off claims that the poor are solely being targeted, Diño said even polluting industrial firms and restaurants are being issued notices for their infractions.

With more than 5,000 barangay chairmen covered by the Manila Bay area, Diño said more than half a million volunteers may be tapped to help clean the bay.

President Duterte vowed to enforce the full force of the law, even permanently closing establishments along Manila Bay. If they fail to properly observe environmental rules.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is the lead agency in the rehabilitation of the heavily polluted Manila Bay.

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## '1,000 barangays ignored Manila Bay cleanup drive'

**BY RAYMOND AFRICA**

NEARLY 18 percent of the 5,714 barangays surrounding Manila Bay have complied with a directive from the interior department to participate in a drive to clean the polluted bay.

The interior department is preparing show-cause orders to the

chiefs of some 1,000 barangays which ignored the directive, said Martin Diño, interior undersecretary for barangay affairs.

The barangays are in Bulacan, Bataan, and Pampanga in Central Luzon region; Rizal, Laguna, and Cavite in the Southern Tagalog region; and in the National Capital Region.

He said the 1,000 barangays have apparently ignored a memorandum issued by Interior Secretary Eduardo Año who directed the 178 local government units and 5,714 barangays along the Manila Bay watershed area to conduct weekly cleanup drives in compliance with

See 1,000 > Page B3

### 1,000

President Duterte's to speed up cleaning of the bay area.

The directive was issued in January, Diño said.

Another memorandum circular, known as barangay level kick-off activities for launching of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, was also issued, this time mandating barangay chiefs and officials to take part in the drive, and encouraging them to observe proper segregation, collec-

tion, and disposal of wastes.

He said every barangay was ordered to submit a post-activity report to monitor compliance with the directive.

"But despite these official pronouncements, there are still some who did not comply. In our rough estimate, around 1,000 of the 5,714 barangays remain to be indifferent to our cause, making a mockery of our overall campaign by continuously disregarding these high level orders for rehabilitation

of the bay," Diño said.

President Duterte, in a speech during the Barangay Summit on Peace and Order on January 8, announced a major cleanup of Manila Bay, warning hotels and other establishments around it to refrain from dumping wastes or they will face closure.

Duterte's order to clean up Manila Bay came months after he ordered for the rehabilitation of Boracay Island which he said was a cesspool.



## DILG monitoring villages in bay cleanup

By Vince Angelo C. Ferreras

THE Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) will issue show cause orders to 1,000 barangays around Manila Bay as well as Laguna de Bay that will not comply with an order by the agency requiring their weekend coastal cleanup.

"Right now, we have prepared issuance of show cause orders to barangay captains of the Regions III, IV-A, and NCR who have failed to comply with the mentioned circular. *Unang hakbang po diyan ay kailangan nilang maipaliwanag sa akin po mismo ang kanilang non-compliance* (They should explain to me first their non-compliance)," DILG Undersecretary for Barangay Affairs Martin B. Diño said in a press conference on Thursday, May 2.

DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2019-09 directed 178 local government units and 5,714 barangays along the Manila Bay Watershed Area to conduct a weekly cleanup.

"In our rough estimate, around 1,000 of the 5,714 barangays remain to be indifferent to our cause, making a complete mockery of our overall campaign by continuously disregarding these high level orders for rehabilitation of the bay," Mr. Diño said.

Along with the DILG order which aims to rehabilitate Manila Bay and other bodies of water, barangay captains are required to report on their weekend cleanup to the DILG.

"*Kapag na-evaluate namin na hindi nakisama 'yung kapitan* (If we have evaluated that the barangay captain did not participate), remember, under Republic Act 7160, book 3 chapter 3, section 389, the *punong barangay* shall enforce all laws *at kapag 'di niya ginawa* (if he does not comply), *grave negligence ang aabutin niya*. Sa Ombudsman *kami magpa-file* (he can be charged with grave negligence which we will file before the Ombudsman)," Mr. Diño said.

He warned all mayors in Metro Manila to implement Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and the Clean Water Act, as he cited the case of Aklan Mayor Cicero Cawaling, who was dismissed for gross neglect of duty in connection with Boracay's environmental situation.

 FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link  
< <https://bit.ly/2UWEM6G> >





# Trash talk

All that hullabaloo about President Duterte declaring war against Canada over a festering trash issue is just all that – trash.

“  
*There's absolutely no way that a war could break out. The whole argument centers around a mislabeled batch of trash that Canada paid to send to the Philippines.*

A lot of people, opposition critics mainly, have raised alarm over the issue, but the reality is chances are slim, if not nil, that a war over trash is going to happen at all. If anything, it will be a mismatch, if not downright funny.

An authority on military might and armaments disclosed that although Canada is no longer the military power it was once, it still owns serious assets that could give the Philippines serious trouble if ever push comes to shove.

Its military is comprised of about 94,000 personnel that operate 384 aircraft, about 2,240 tanks, armored vehicles and artillery pieces, and 63 ships and boats including 12 frigates, four submarines and 20 patrol vessels.

The Philippines, on the other hand, has a larger but much less modern military. Its 305,000 troops operate only 171

aircraft, none of which are modern fighters, 834 armored vehicles and towed artillery pieces, and 39 patrol vessels that work with three frigates, 10 corvettes and 67 auxiliary vessels. It doesn't even have a submarine.

But before the specter of war scares us all, it is worth noting that there is essentially no way that Canada and the Philippines can effectively clash over trash.

As the one threatening the war, the Philippines is most likely the one which has to project its military across the Pacific. Sadly, it does not have the capability to deploy significant numbers of troops across the ocean to Canada, let alone open a beachhead against Canadian defenders, so say experts.

In the event that Canada decides to launch a preemptive strike against us after President Duterte's declaration of war, it would also be hard-pressed to do so since, of the 63 boats and ships that it has, none of these are carriers or amphibious assault ships. So, like the Philippines, it cannot project significant force ashore.

So what does this all boil down

to? There's absolutely no way that a war could break out. The whole argument centers around a mislabeled batch of trash that Canada paid to send to the Philippines. It was supposed to be filled with recyclables, but someone lied on the paperwork and filled it with hazardous wastes that include food and used diapers.

“  
*Duterte, for all his faults, stands at the heart of this transformation by singlehandedly transforming the Philippine domestic and foreign policy trajectory unlike any of his predecessors.*

It is but understandable that Filipinos, including our President, would be up in arms as the trash has been sitting in our port for years now despite assurances by the Canadian government that it would take the trash back in cooperation with the Philippine government.

But Duterte, known for his bravado, would not be placated. He has threatened to bring the trash himself to Canadian shores if it will not be taken back pronto.

He can't be faulted though for such pronouncements. It was borne out of his exasperation over the



fact that, despite warnings and all, it has taken years for Canada to act. Green activists are taking the President's line, knowing that hazardous waste could have lasting effects on the health of Filipinos.

And this is where Duterte shows that he is indeed a cut over the rest of our previous leaders. As a political researcher once said, Duterte has a political style that appeals to the people – he is first and foremost a populist. He has proven this in many situations in the past. Halfway into his presidency, Duterte's popularity ratings are still soaring.

Strongman-populists like Duterte, who have been tough on corruption, illegal drugs and criminality, have given rise to a new brand of politics that have dislodged the liberal elite who have suffered one electoral setback after another – no business as usual practices.

Duterte, for all his faults, stands at the heart of this transformation by singlehandedly transforming the Philippine domestic and foreign policy trajectory unlike any of his predecessors.

He was tough on Obama. He was tough on the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. He has started to stand up to China. He said we could take on Canada.

If ever, Filipinos are starting to realize that we don't have to kowtow to the more developed nations, much less former colonizers.

Yes, Duterte has shown them all. We will not be bullied nor be pushed over.

Duterte says so – trash talk or no trash talk.



# Malaya Business Insight

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## A diver's paradise



**Heritage Site.** The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park was declared in 1993 a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its high density of marine species and the different kinds of birds and marine turtles.

**W**ITH 7,107 islands, the Philippines offers bodies of water, with highly diverse marine wildlife and seascape, for all kinds of divers and dive enthusiasts to explore. This is making the country a popular major diving hub in Asia.

The Philippines has countless diving spots suitable for divers of different skills – from beginners who are simply looking for fun recreational activities, to intermediate divers seeking new underwater challenges to hone their skills and experts in search of new adventures.

At the top of the list are Anilao in Batangas and the Tubbataha Reefs in Palawan, with its impressive marine biodiversity and awe-inspiring vertical reef walls dropping to over 100 meters in depth.

The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park was declared in 1993 a World Heritage Site by the

*Divers of varying skills will enjoy amazing underwater discoveries underneath the crystal clear waters of the Philippines. The Filipinos' innate warmth and hospitality, as well as unique Filipino offerings, will make the experience more fun.*

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its high density of marine species and the different kinds of birds and marine turtles.

Anilao and Tubbataha Reefs diving spots, favorites of deep and open water divers, host different types of sharks, schools of fish, turtles and colorful corals.

For adventure-seekers and history junkies, the Philippines also has many exciting seafaring

stories and countless sunken ships to explore such as World War II vessels, including Japanese freighters and gunboats that have now become homes to various marine species.

The country has ideal training spots to sharpen the skills of neophyte divers. Cebu has underwater caves, passageways and terrains teeming with marine life. Night diving is even possible in a few areas.

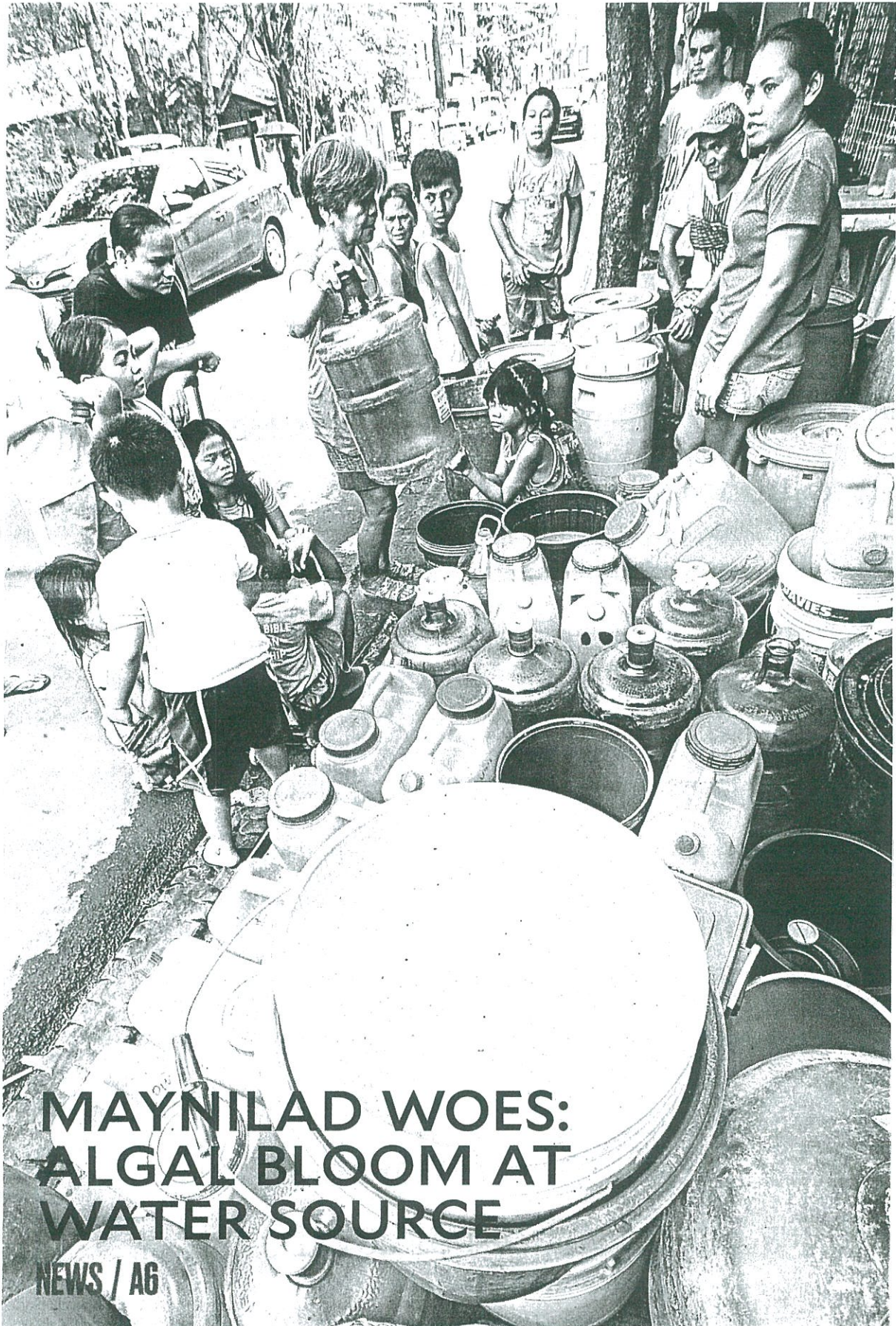
The open water in El Nido in Palawan and in Cebu are favorite

haunts of nocturnal creatures that look majestic in the moonlight.

The Philippines has the most number of Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Heritage Parks and has been declared a Flyway Network Site, this refers to the network of important sites used by migratory waterbirds throughout the flyway.

The Philippines truly has so much to offer new and experienced divers, from Subic and Batangas in Luzon; to central Philippines - Cebu, Bohol, Negros Island and Palawan; and Mindanao - Davao and Camiguin, as well as points in-between.

Divers of varying skills will enjoy amazing underwater discoveries underneath the crystal clear waters of the Philippines. The Filipinos' innate warmth and hospitality, as well as unique Filipino offerings, will make the experience more fun.



# MAYNILAD WOES: ALGAL BLOOM AT WATER SOURCE

NEWS / A6

**DRAWN FROM THE WELL** Residents of T.S. Subdivision in Almanza Dos, Las Piñas City, queue for water from a deep well for a fee of P2 per container as taps run dry because Maynilad Water Services Inc. has implemented rotating service interruptions. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE



# Algal bloom spells woes for Maynilad customers

Maynilad Water Services Inc. is drawing more water treated at its Putatan filtration plants in Muntinlupa City despite the algal bloom in Laguna de Bay, its source of raw water for customers in the cities of Muntinlupa, Las Piñas and Parañaque, and parts of Cavite province.

These areas, however, will continue to experience eight hours of low water pressure or no water at all over the next two weeks.

Last week, Maynilad announced that water supply would be disrupted in several areas in Parañaque, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas and Cavite starting April 30 because of the proliferation of algae in Laguna Lake due to warmer temperatures brought about by El Niño.

Maynilad is the private concessionaire in the west zone in parts of Metro Manila and Cavite, while Manila Water Co. Inc. is the concessionaire in the east zone, which covers other parts of the metropolis and certain areas in Rizal province.

For other areas in its concession area, Maynilad gets its supply from Angat Dam in Bulacan province, whose water level dropped below critical level early this week due to rising temperatures and lack of rain.

In a statement, Maynilad said Putatan Water Treatment Plant No. 1 and No. 2 were now producing a combined 125 million liters daily (MLD) from a low of 80 MLD.

"While this is still below our normal production—as the facilities' full combined capacity is at 250 MLD—it is an improvement that will help us to better stabilize supply in the network, and marginally increase the supply availability window for some of the affect-



**GREEN STUFF** Algae have proliferated in Laguna Lake, a source of water for residents of Muntinlupa, Parañaque, Las Piñas and parts of Cavite province, due to El Niño, prompting Maynilad Water Services Inc. to impose eight-hour service interruptions in these areas. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

ed areas," the company said.

It said it was intensifying "treatment interventions to address the issues brought about by the algal bloom and bring our production back to normal levels."

"Our technical teams are working double time to bring our water production back to normal levels sooner rather than later," Maynilad said.

Customers in parts of Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa and Cavite will continue to experience low pressure to no water supply daily from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.

## Mobile tankers

Maynilad said it was deploying 40 mobile tankers to bring water to severely affected areas.

The heavy algal presence was first observed on April 23, prompting company efforts to clean up and unclog its two filtration plants in Putatan. As a result, eight-hour supply interruptions were experienced on April 27-28.

"This situation is expected to continue until May 14 . . . when the full implementation of the remedial treatment interventions are expected to have already addressed the is-

sues brought about by the algal bloom," Maynilad said.

Despite the supply interruptions, there appears to be no calls to penalize Maynilad for its failure to provide continuous water supply to customers in the west zone.

## Penalties

On April 24, Manila Water was slapped with P1.13 billion in penalties for the water shortage in large areas of Metro Manila and parts of Rizal in March.

The penalties consisted of a fine of P534 million and P600 million to be spent on developing a new water source that Manila Water will not be allowed to recover from customers through rate increases, according to the regulator Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

The fine is for not meeting service requirements—that supply be available to customers 24 hours every day at a pressure of 7 psi (pounds per square inch).

The penalties are on top of the estimated P500 million that Manila Water said it would return to customers in the form of a rebate. —RONNEL W. DOMINGO INQ



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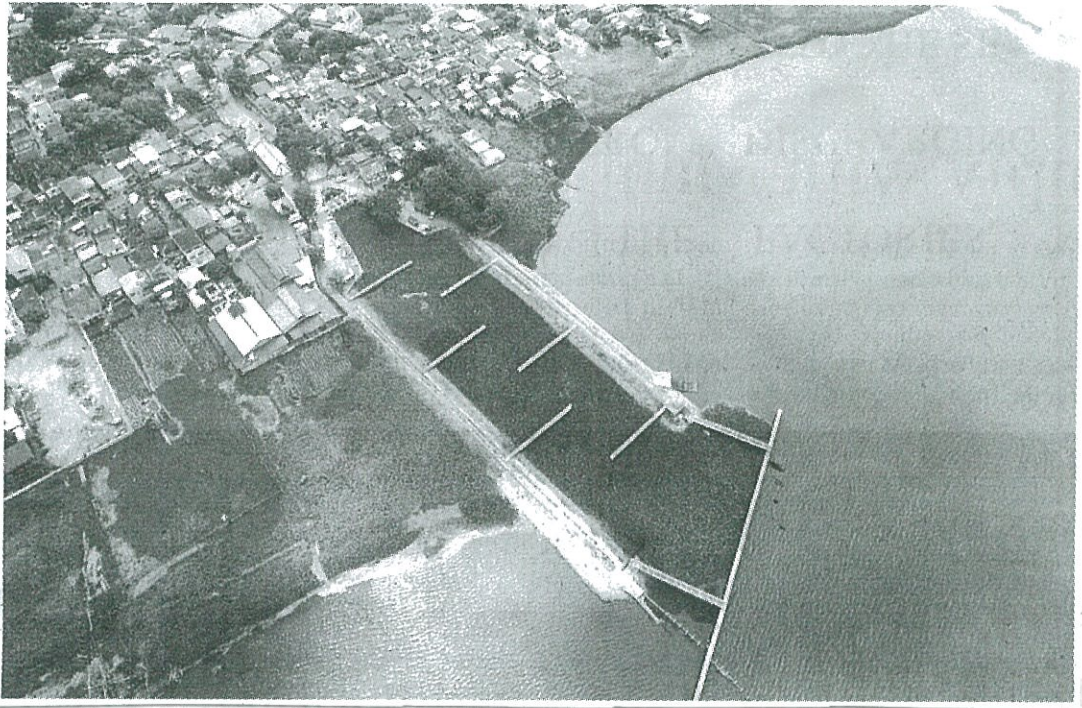
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**CLOGGED BY ALGAE** – A drone shot of Maynilad's Water Treatment Plant in Putatan, Muntinlupa City, Thursday, shows its intake clogged by algae growth. Maynilad said cleaning up the plant was one reason for the water service interruptions in parts of Muntinlupa, Parañaque and Las Piñas cities and Cavite. (Ali Vicoy)





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**Strange event** Fisherman stares at algae buildup at Laguna Lake amid the heat and the receding water line.

BOB DUNGO JR.



# Water disruption persists, Laguna Lake cleanup pushed

BY JED MACAPAGAL  
AND RUELLE CASTRO

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. said it increased the production of its Putatan water treatment facilities 1 and 2 from 80 million liters per day (MLD) to 125 MLD as of 2 a.m. yesterday, May 2 but noted supply disruption in its service area may still continue.

"We hope to ramp up to 151 MLD in the week or so," said Ramoncito Fernandez, Maynilad president.

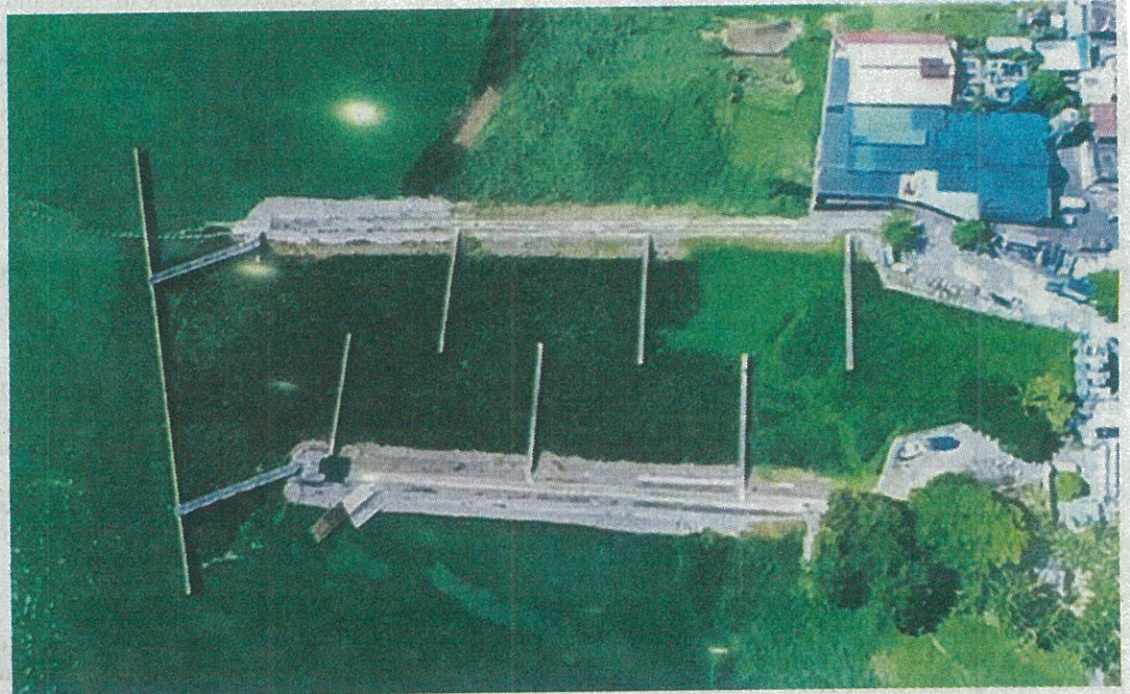
Maynilad said the facilities are still below the normal full production of 250 MLD per day due to the algae proliferation in Laguna Lake caused by warm temperatures brought about by the mild El Niño.

"We are intensifying our treatment interventions to address the issues brought about by the algal bloom and bring our production back to normal levels. Meantime, our affected customers in portions of Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa and Cavite will continue to experience low pressure to no water supply daily, within the schedule provided previously, until May 14, 2019," the company said in a statement.

Fernandez said government should now put effort into cleaning Laguna Bay similar to what has been done in Boracay and Manila Bay.

Fernandez described this year's algal bloom as "unprecedented" as this four times than usual that Maynilad has to use higher concentration of chemicals to treat the algae before the water is pumped into the 250 MLD Putatan treatment facility.

"We have been espousing for the cleanup of Laguna Lake. LAGUNA Lake has to be dredged,



Aerial shot of Maynilad's facility in Laguna Lake.

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protected," Fernandez said when asked about the need for a large scale clean-up drive similar to that done for Boracay and Manila Bay.

"We're willing to provide technical support if needed," said Fernandez.

"This is the first time we are seeing such intense algae formation," said Fernandez, noting that such algal bloom trouble surfaces every three years.

Algae is generated because of too much nutrients mostly phosphorous and nitrogen coming from fertilizers, pesticides, various sources that are in the lake. With intense heat and photosynthesis,

this green matter is generated.

Maynilad said as temporary solution, 40 mobile water tankers are deployed in severely affected areas to provide potable water to customers while its technical teams are working to resolve the algae issues.

During the Holy Week, the company conducted several water network enhancement activities that included facility maintenance works, pipe decommissioning, pipe interconnections and valve replacements that also caused a water supply disruption.

Maynilad is owned and managed by Maynilad Water Holdings Co., Inc. a joint venture between Metro

Pacific Investments Corp., DMCI Holdings, Inc. and Marubeni Corp.

It is the largest private water concessionaire in the Philippines in terms of customer base, covering the cities of Manila, Quezon City, Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon; the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario that are all in Cavite. Metro Pacific Investments Corp., (MPIC) meanwhile said Maynilad contributed most of the P900 million core profit its water business generated in the first quarter of

the year.

Maynilad posted revenues of P5.7 billion, up 8 percent from P5.2 billion last year, as volume increased 2 percent and a tariff increase of 2.7 percent in October 2018 and 5.7 percent in January this year. It billed 1,420,580 customers for the period, up 3 percent.

"In the face of threats to water supply posed by climate change and population growth in our concession area, Maynilad continues to invest heavily in water security programs to minimize dependence on the Angat Dam, and in a comprehensive Non-Revenue Water (NRW) Reduction Program," the company said.

Capital expenditure stood at P2.4 billion in the first three months of 2019, much of it directed to upgrading and building reservoirs and pumping stations, laying primary pipelines, and constructing wastewater facilities to improve public health.

"Maynilad's total distribution line is now at 7,691 kilometers with a 24-hour water supply and sewerage coverage at 98 percent and 20 percent of its population, respectively, while maintaining an average water pressure of over 16 psi at 68 percent," the company said.

"In water, following a constructive and professional rate rebasing

in 2018, MWSS approved a 5.7 percent inflation-linked tariff increase on 1st January 2019. This is good news, but unfortunately, the rebasing didn't address the corporate income tax recovery issue inherited from the previous Administration, which we continue to pursue," said Jose Ma. K. Lim, MPIC president.

MPIC closed the period with profit of P3.5 billion, down 7 percent from P3.8 billion a year ago, due to refinancing and share issuance costs plus various project expenses.

The company however said its "core profit" was relatively flat at P3.7 billion compared to P3.6 billion in 2018.



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## Wawa project okay nears

ONE of the proponents of the Wawa Bulk water supply project in Rizal is confident of obtaining the approval of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) board of trustees next week.

Prime Infra which is part of the Wawa consortium also said the group can accelerate the project so that can deliver 80 million liters per day (MLD) of raw water as early as 2021 and will be upgraded to 500 MLD by 2025.

Enrique Razon Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of Prime Infra, said the project is calendared for approval by the regulatory body by May 9.

Crucial to the approval is the dropping of a case filed by An-

thony Violago, president of San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders and Developers Group (SLRBD) against the MWSS, Manila Water Co. Inc. and the National Water Resources Board of allegedly blocking his company's plans to develop the Wawa project.

SLRBD is the partner of Prime Infra in the Wawa JV Co., which will develop Wawa as raw water supply source. Manila Water Co. will treat the water and distribute it to Manila east zone customers.

MWSS earlier said the project will only push through if SLRBD will withdraw the said case.

"The Wawa water supply project is among the priority projects that was presented and submitted already by MWSS

administrator Reynaldo Velasco to President Rodrigo Duterte. We look forward to the endorsement of MWSS to authorize its concessionaire, Manila Water, to move forward with this high priority project," Razon said.

Wawa JV said it has submitted the results of its joint technical study to Velasco last April 15 and was subsequently presented to MWSS trustees on April 23.

The MWSS has long been citing the Wawa Lake as a potential water supply source for Metro Manila as it does not require an expensive treatment technology like reverse osmosis compared to Laguna Lake and other similar water supply options.