

DATE : 17 JUL 2019

DAY : Wednesday

DENR

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Cimatu urges ISF: Share in Manila Bay rehab

By Rio N. Araja

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu on Tuesday urged informal settler families living along waterways to do their share in the Manila Bay rehabilitation through the availment of the government's relocation program.

He cited the importance of the relocation of the informal settlers, saying such would hasten ongoing efforts to rehabilitate polluted creeks and other waterways draining into the historic bay.

He said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is committed to make Manila Bay "swimmable" by December this year.

He made the appeal when he and Manila Mayor Francisco Domagoso inspected last weekend an area along Estero de San Antonio Abad in Malate that used to be occupied by 50 informal settler families.

The area was cleared of illegal structures after the families agreed to transfer to a relocation site of the National Housing Authority in Caloocan City's Tala district.

At least 20 other informal settler families have been left behind 20 along the waterways, which is one of Manila's filthiest esteros.

"We would like to appeal to the remaining 20 families to comply with the requirements of the NHA, so that we can already move them to their new location, to a better place. Not atop the water canals," Cimatu said.



DENR Sec. Cimatu umapela sa informal settler families

UMAPELA si Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu sa informal settler families na naninirahan sa kahabaan ng waterways na magbigay rin ng kanilang ambag sa sarili para sa Manila Bay rehabilitation at tanggapin na ang alok ng pamahalaan para sa relocation program.

Ayon kay Cimatu, nagpatuloy ang relocation ng ISFs

para maibalik at malinis ang maruming sapa at iba pang daluyan ng tubig para malinis ang makasaysayan baybayin na ang nais ng pamahalaan na muling maglanguyan ngayong Disyembre ng kasalukuyan taon.

Ginawa ng hepe ng environment ang apela matapos nilang inspeksyunin ni Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Mo-

reno" Domagoso ang kahabaan ng Estero de San Antonio Abad sa Malate na inookupahan ng may 50 informal settler families.

Nilinis na ang naturang lugar sa illegal structure matapos pumayag ang 50 pamilya na nanirahan sa naturang lugar na mailipat sa kanilang relocation site na pinangasiwaan ng National Housing Authority sa Tala District, Caloocan City. **SANTIC**



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INFORMAL SETTLERS, PINAALIS SA 'WATERWAYS'

UMAPELA si Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu sa hanay ng mga 'informal settler families (ISFs)' na naninirahan sa waterways na magbigay rin ng kanilang ambag sa sarili para sa Manila Bay rehabilitation at tanggapin na ang alok ng pamahalaan para sa relocation program.

Ayon kay Cimatu, ang relocation ng ISFs sa kasalukuyan ay nagpapatuloy para muling maibalik at malinis ang maruming sapa at iba pang daluyan ng tubig upang malinis ang makasaysayan baybayin na ang nais ng pamahalaan ay muling paglanguyan ngayong

Disyembre ng kasalukuyang taon.

Nagsagawa ng inspeksiyon ang DENR sa Estero de San Antonio Abad sa Malate na inokupahan ng may 50 informal settler families.

Ang naturang lugar ay nalinis na sa illegal structure matapos ang 50 pamilya na ninirahan sa naturang lugar ay pumayag na mailipat sa kanilang relocation site na pinangasiwaan ng National Housing Authority (NHA) sa Caloocan City sa Tala district, kung saan nailipat ang may 20 ISFs residente mula sa estero sa Manila.

"We would like to appeal to the remaining 20

families to comply with the requirements of the NHA, so that we can already move them to their new location, to a better place. Hindi rito sa ibabaw ng estero," pahayag pa ni Cimatu.

Ipinagmalaki pa ng DENR secretary na ang fecal coliform level sa naturang estero ay nakamamanghang bumaba.

"Napakataas ng coliform level nito dati naabot sa 1.3 billion [most probable number per 100 milliliters], pero ngayon umabot na lang sa mga 10 million [mpn/100ml]," dagdag pa ni Cimatu.

**BENEDICT
ABAYGAR, JR.**



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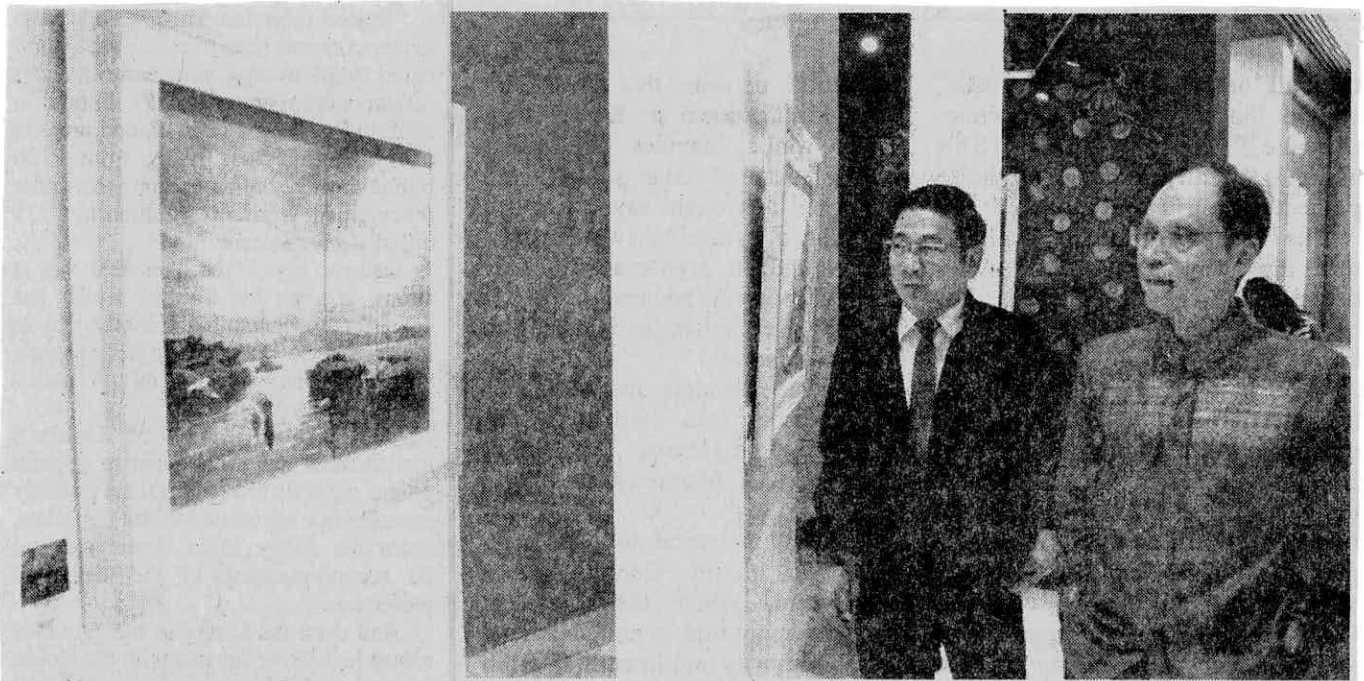


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THE PRIME MOVER. Environmental lawyer and activist Antonio Oposa Jr. (right) looks at paintings depicting Manila Bay during the Art for Manila Bay Rehabilitation Exhibit organized by the Dynamic Art Group and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources at The Gallery of the Solaire Resort and Casino in Parañaque City. In 1999, Oposa acted as counsel for concerned residents of Manila Bay joined by other respondents who sued the government for its failure to protect Manila Bay for the future generations of Filipinos. The suit led the Supreme Court to issue in 2008 the Writ of Continuing Mandamus to 12 government agencies, including the DENR, for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay and the restoration of its water quality to make it fit for swimming and other contact recreation. Joining Oposa is DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda. The exhibit runs until July 27, 2019.



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3 FOREST RANGERS TINUGIS AT PINAPUTUKAN NG MGA ILLEGAL LOGGER

CAGAYAN – TATLONG forest rangers ang nagtago at nakulong sa kagubatan ang nailigtas ng awtoridad matapos na tugisin sila at paputukan ng mga illegal logger sa Barangay Sta. Margarita, Baggao.

Ayon kay Mayor Joan Dunuan ng Baggao, Cagayan, nagsasagawa na sila ng masusing imbestigasyon kung ano ang mga pangalan ng tatlo na hinaras ng pinaniniwalaang mga illegal logger.

Pumunta sa kabundukan ang mga forest rangers para magsagawa ng monitoring laban sa illegal logging nang sila ay paputukan at napag-alaman niya na may koneksiyon sa Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) Alcala, ang tatlong forest rangers.

Nadiskubre sa lugar ng mga nag-rescue sa tatlong forest rangers ang maraming pinutol na puno.

Sa kasalukuyan ay 13 forest rangers kabilang ang ilang mga kagawad ng militar at police ang nagbantay upang matutukan ang kabundukan ng Baggao mula sa mga illegal logger.

Ayon sa alkalde na bahagi ng kanyang kampanya ang makapagtanim ng isang bilyong puno sa Baggao para maibalik ang green forest.

IRENE GONZALES



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P5-M 'hot' logs seized in Bulacan

MALOLOS – The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) seized P5 million worth of illegally cut lumber in a warehouse in Guiguinto, Bulacan on Monday.

Czar Nuqui, chief of the NBI's environmental crime division, said they raided the warehouse in Barangay Tiaong after receiving reports on the presence of "hot" logs.

The warehouse is reportedly owned by a certain Ricky Yu.

Nuqui said the seized logs were sourced from the Angat watershed and Benguet forest.

Fernando Pitargue, supervising science research specialist from the Forest Products Research and Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology, said the confiscated lumber include narra, a banned species, mayapis and white lauan.

– Ramon Efren Lazaro



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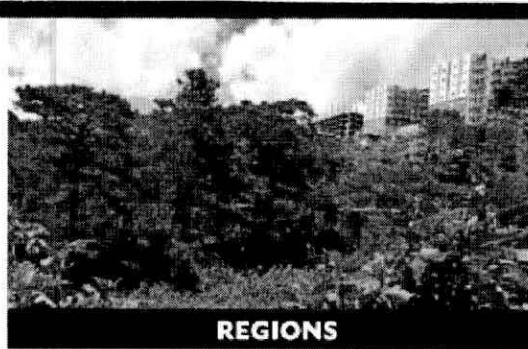


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REGIONS

Baguio building moratorium sought

BAGUIO CITY—On the 29th anniversary of the 7.7-magnitude quake that devastated this city, Mayor Benjamin Magalong says a “Boracay-scale” rehabilitation costing at least P500 million is being worked out with Malacañang as the local government seeks a one-year moratorium on building construction and tree cutting to fix the sewage system and allow pine forests to bloom. —STORY BY VINCENT CABREZA

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HEADLINES



Baguio eyes ban on new buildings, tree cutting

One-year moratorium set to fix sewer lines, rehab pine forest

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:03 AM July 17, 2019



FIXING BAGUIO Patches of pine for and investors. But local officials are rehabilitates the city. —EV ESPIRITU

FIXING BAGUIO Patches of pine forests give way to buildings and commercial establishments as Baguio City welcomes tourists and investors. But local officials are planning to ban tree cutting and building construction for a year as the government rehabilitates the city. —EV ESPIRITU

BAGUIO CITY, Benguet, Philippines — A one-year moratorium on building constructions as well as cutting of trees in the city is being worked out with Malacañang to repair the sewage system and allow pine forests to bloom, Mayor Benjamin Magalong told members of the city council on Tuesday.

He said Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Interior Secretary Eduardo Año were drawing up an executive order that would facilitate “Boracay-scale” repairs and the upgrade of public services by tapping national resources.

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He spoke to the council on the 29th anniversary of the July 16, 1990, earthquake that devastated the city and wide areas of northern Luzon.

Baguio took months to be restored after the 7.7-magnitude temblor toppled buildings and killed more than 1,000 people.

In 1945, the city also underwent massive rehabilitation when major areas were bombarded by American airplanes during the liberation from occupying Japanese forces at the end of World War II.



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P500M needed

Magalong said the draft order would not require the closure of Baguio in the same way the national government had stopped tourists from visiting Boracay Island in Aklan province for six months last year while government agencies cleaned up the tourist site.

Baguio needs to be open for transient workers and students and for travelers headed for other Cordillera towns like Sagada in Mountain Province, he said.

The rehabilitation plan would require at least P500 million from the national government, he said, adding that the scope would include connecting 90,000 households to new sewage treatment plants in the city.

The plan would also include plugging leaks in the city's sewers that may have increased the volume of waste discharged into the Bued and Balili rivers in the city's outskirts.

Magalong said bad sewage appeared to be a major contributor to river pollution because treated water from the only sewage treatment plant along Balili River had been deteriorating. Only 2,400 houses are connected to the treatment plant, he said.

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Magalong said it may take P365 million for the city government to rebuild and modernize the sewer lines, some of which were built in the early 1990s.

Population growth

To make this work, the city government would need to review population growth as well as the density of buildings in the business and tourist centers.

An initial report from a team commissioned to study Baguio's urban carrying capacity concluded that the city's resources are strained at daytime when the population grows to 725,000 people with the influx of out-of-town workers, students, businessmen and tourists.

The study also said the city's built-up areas had encroached into its forest cover. About 2.5 million trees remain standing in Baguio, which represent 28 percent (1,643 hectares) of the city's 5,700-ha area.

Apart from a massive greening program, the moratorium would allow the city government to review the rules governing building constructions, Magalong said.

For example, some building projects are exempted from zoning regulations by national agencies. The Baguio Water District has not been consulted each time a new building project gets clearance to determine how it will impact on potable water supply. —**Vincent Cabreza**



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THE EXPOSITION OF THE PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

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Garbage & pollution – every small move helps

SOME problems are so big, they cannot possibly be solved immediately with one plan of action. Such is the problem of garbage and pollution in relation to the move to clean up Manila Bay and in relation further to the worldwide problem of plastics overwhelming landfills and now being dumped in the world's oceans.

We must welcome every move to solve even just a small part of the problem, with the hope that it will inspire others to make their own contributions of their own.

New Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso has made cleaning up Manila a major part of his program for the city, partly because, he said, he once worked as a garbage collector and thus has intimate knowledge of the problem.

Last week, he began with one area close to Manila City Hall – the site of the Andres Bonifacio Shrine, with a monument of the national hero, bolo drawn in revolutionary defiance, as seen from the many principal streets converging at the site from north and south of the city.

The mayor almost stepped on human feces when he went to inspect the site, which was swarming with informal settlers – “squatters” – and vendors tending hundreds of makeshift stalls. He has now ordered the area cleared. The mayor and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu also inspected Estero de San Antonio Abad in Malate, now cleared of squatter

families who will be resettled in housing provided by the DENR and provided with some financial assistance to start a small livelihood.

There are hundreds of rivers and esteros pouring filth into Manila Bay. Since the start of the DENR effort to clean up the bay, the towns and cities on its shores have been ordered to stop this pollution coming from their areas. In Manila, the Manila Zoo has now installed its own septic treatment plant (STP), where it had none before. The Ospital ng Maynila will now also have its own STP.

Plastics are another facet of the problem, with the Philippines pinpointed as one of the major sources of plastic wastes in the world today. A study by the Global Alliance of Incinerator Alternatives found that Filipinos use 48 million shopping bags daily, plus 17 billion plastic products of various kinds.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan has now filed Senate Bill 40, the “Single-Use Plastics Regulation and Management Act of 2029,” which seeks to ban the importation, manufacture, and use of single-use plastics, such as stirrers and soft drinks straws commonly used in eateries of all kinds, and sachets used for pills and other medicine.

We welcome all these developments and hope that they will move others – business enterprises, public institutions, government officials, and ordinary individuals – to do what they can on the problem of garbage and pollution that has grown to such immense proportions that they now threaten all life on our earth, including our own.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

THE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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THE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Wednesday, July 17, 2019

Roni San Diego
MANILA BULLETIN
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GARBAGE + POLLUTION - EVERY SMALL MOVE HELPS



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Basura at polusyon— bawat maliit na hakbang ay makatutulong

July 17, 2019 Filed under Editorial Posted by Balita Online RSS Feed

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May mga problemang napakalaki, na hindi agarang masolusyunan ng isang planong aksiyon. Halimbawa nito ang problema sa basura at polusyon bilang kaugnay ng hakbang upang malinis ang Manila Bay at may higit pang kaugnayan sa pandaigdigang problema ng plastic na umaapaw na sa mga landfills at ngayoy natatambak sa mga karagatan ng mundo.

Dapat nating tanggapin ang bawat hakbang na nagbibigay ng solusyon kahit pa sa maliit na bahagi ng problema, sa pag-asang magbibigay ito ng inspirasyon sa iba upang gumawa ng kanilang sariling kontribusyon.

Sinimulan na ni bagong Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso ang paglilinis ng Maynila na isang pangunahing bahagi ng kanyang programa para sa lungsod, dahil na rin, aniya, na dati siyang nagtrabaho bilang kolektor ng basura, kaya't may malalim siyang pag-unawa sa problema.

Nitong nakaraang, linggo sinimulan niya ang paglilinis sa lugar na kalapit lamang ng Manila City Hall—ang Andres Bonifacio Shrine, na monumento ng pambansang bayani, na may nakataas na bolo bilang tanda ng rebolusyon, na matatanaw sa maraming pangunahing lansangan na magtatagpo sa lugar mula sa hilaga at timog ng lungsod.

Muntikan pang makaapak ng dumi ng tao ang alkalde nang magtungo ito sa lugar upang mag-inspeksyon, na puno ng mga iskwater at mga nagtitinda na nagtayo ng halos daan-daang tindahan. Ipinag-utos na niya ang paglilinis sa lugar. Ininspeksyon din ng mayor at ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu ang Estero de San Antonio Abad sa Malate, na ngayon ay wala ng mga iskwater na pamilya na lililipat sa mga pabahay na ipagkakaloob ng DENR kasama ang tulong pinansiyal upang makapagsimula ng maliit na kabuhayan.

Mayroong daan-daang ilog at mga estero na nagtatapon ng dumi sa Manila Bay. Mula nang simulan ng DENR ang hakbang upang linisin ang look, ipinag-utos na sa mga bayan at lungsod sa paligid nito ang paghinto ng polusyon mula sa kanilang mga lugar. Sa Maynila, nagkabit na ang Manila Zoo ng sarili nitong septic treatment plant (STP), na wala dati. Magkakaroon na rin ang Ospital ng Maynila ng sariling STP.

Ang plastic ay iba pang anggulo ng problema, kung saan ang Pilipinas ang itinuturong isa sa mga pangunahing pinagmumulan ng mga basurang plastic sa mundo ngayon. Sa isang pag-aaral ng Global Alliance of Incinerator Alternatives, natuklasan na gumagamit ang mga Pilipino ng 48 milyong shopping bag kada araw, dagdag pa ang 17 bilyong iba't ibang produktong plastic.

Naghain na si Senador Francis Pangilinan ng Senate Bill 40, ang "Single-Use Plastics Regulation and Management Act of 2029," na layong ipagbawal ang importasyon, pagmamanupaktura, at paggamit ng mga single-use plastics, tulad ng mga stirrer at straw ng mga soft drinks na kalimitang ginagamit sa mga kainan, at ang mga pakete para sa mga pills at iba pang uri ng gamot.

Tinatanggap natin ang lahat ng mga pagbabagong ito at umaasa tayo na magbibigay inspirasyon ito sa iba—mga establisyamento, pampublikong institusyon, mga opisyal ng pamahalaan, at mga ordinaryong indibiduwal—upang gawin ang kanilang magagawa hinggil sa problema sa basura at polusyon na lumaki na sa matinding proporsyon na ngayon ay nagbibigay panganib sa lahat ng buhay sa mundo, kabilang ang sa atin.



4 nagtapon ng basura sa highway, huli

MONCADA, Tarlac - Inaresto ng pulisya ang apat na katao makaraang maaktuhan umanong nagtatapon ng solid waste materials sa silangang bahagi ng highway sa Barangay San Julian, sa Moncada, Tarlac, nitong Lunes ng hapon.

Kinilala ng pulisya ang mga inarestong sina Jumar Leonardo, driver ng Isuzu Elf; Carlito Manaba; Jojo Ursua; at Ranjit Delos Santos, pawang nasa hustong gulang, at taga-Aguilar, Pangasinan.

Dakong 1:40 ng hapon at nagpapatrulya ang grupo ni Staff Sgt. Ronald Calpito sa highway sa Bgy. San Julian nang namataan nila ang apat na suspek na nagtatapon ng basura sa highway.

Inihahanda na ang kaso ng paglabag sa RA 8749 (An Act Providing for a Comprehensive Air Pollution Control Policy and for Other Purposes) laban sa mga suspek.

Leandro Alborote



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CBCP calls on faithful to minimize use of plastic

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday joined calls for the minimal use of single-use plastic and the implementation of other measures to preserve and protect the environment, amid what they called a "continuing ecological crisis."

In a nine-page pastoral statement titled "An Urgent Call for Ecological Conversion, Hope in the Face of Climate Emergency," the bishops asked their dioceses to lead actions to revitalize ecology programs.

This is one of the CBCP's actions paying heed to Pope Francis' environmental edict "Laudato Si," which was released in 2015.

"We, in the Philippine Church, are one with the Holy Father in pursuing common agenda to protect our fragile ecosystem from the threat of the continuing ecological crisis. We have the moral imperative to act together decisively in order to save

our common home. This is our Christian duty and responsibility," read the statement, signed by CBCP president Davao Archbishop Romulo Valles.

The CBCP recommended the faithful to start living simply and to refrain from using single-use plastic which greatly contributes to the pollution of the ocean and waterways.

"Live simply, minimize consumption and actively practice ecological awareness and action through integral waste segregation and by minimizing the use of plastic and paper, by eliminating single-use plastics, polystyrene and the like, from our homes and institutions," the CBCP said.

The bishops also called on the faithful to "participate in efforts to protect and preserve our seas, oceans and fisheries resources." They also voiced their favor on the protection of watersheds at a time when many parts of the country are still experiencing water shortage.



Group backs CBCP stand on RE use

AN environmental think-tank has supported the stand of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines to "divest dirty energy" sources such as coal.

The Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development, a group advocating for the use of renewable energy, lauded the efforts of the bishops' group to protect the environment.

"The moral leadership of the Church lends great weight to our cause for a coal-free Philippines," CEED executive director Gerry Arances in a statement.

"No amount of short-term profit justifies the long-term compromise of the health of our people and the

Earth's climate," he added.

Arance added that he hopes this would pave the way for a trend "where all investors will reject coal and other fossil fuels" and choose the Earth's welfare over profit.

On Wednesday, the CBCP announced its decision on the matter after their three-day Plenary Assembly in Manila.

Fr. Edwin Gariguez, Caritas Philippines executive secretary, said the divestment is included in their 10 action points for Laudato Si' campaign that the CBCP adopted.

He noted that the dioceses would instead place its money in renewable sources of energy.

The Catholic priest admitted that divestment would take some time to accomplish since there are legal procedures that must be observed.

The Philippines is one of the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, yet it is also one of the few countries in the world where investments in coal continue to rise.

In 2015, the Vatican published Laudato si' (Praise Be to You), an encyclical subtitled "On care for a common home," which stated that the warming of the planet is a symptom of the world pursuing short-term economic gains at the expense of harming the planet.



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SC gags IBP, SolGen on *kalikasan* petition

By EDU PUNAY

The Supreme Court (SC) has issued a gag order on counsels of parties in the writ of *kalikasan* petition that seeks to compel the government to protect shoals in the West Philippine Sea from Chinese poachers.

In full session yesterday, the SC justices directed the counsels of petitioners, including De La Salle University law dean Chel Diokno and Andres Palacios from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, and Solicitor General Jose Calida

to refrain from publicly commenting on issues involving the case.

The High Court issued the order following public statements made by both camps after fishermen from Palawan and Zambales disowned the petition filed by the IBP.

During oral arguments last July 9, Calida submitted to the SC affidavits of 22 fishermen through which they declared being unaware of the IBP's filing of the *kalikasan* petition on their behalf.

Some of them even claimed they were made to sign a blank

document by the IBP lawyer whose help they had sought regarding the closure of school and demolition of their houses.

The justices unanimously decided to suspend the oral arguments and ordered the parties to "move in the premises" or inform the court of their next actions on the case.

It was Calida who announced to the media that counsels of petitioners had agreed to the dismissal of the case at a closed-door conference with the justices. — **With Jose Rodel Clapano, Helen Flores, Cecille Suerte Felipe**



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High court gags SolGen, IBP over kalikasan writ

By Rey E. Requejo

THE Supreme Court has issued a gag order to stop the involved parties from commenting on the writ of kalikasan petition seeking to compel the government to protect disputed shoals in the West Philippine Sea from Chinese poachers.

In an en banc session on Tuesday, the

Court ordered the counsels of petitioners, including losing senatorial bet and De La Salle University law dean Chel Diokno and Andres Palacios from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, and Solicitor General Jose Calida to refrain from publicly commenting on issues involving the pending case.

The order comes on the heels of public statements made by both camps after

fishermen from Palawan and Zambales disowned the petition filed by the IBP, saying it was done without their knowledge and consent.

Calida, during oral arguments on July 9, submitted to the Court the affidavits of 22 fishermen, stating that they were unaware of the IBP's filing of the kalikasan petition on their behalf. Some of them

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High court...

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even claimed they were made to sign a blank document by the IBP lawyer they sought for help regarding the closure of a school and demolition of their house.

The justices unanimously decided to suspend the oral arguments and ordered the parties to "move in the premises" or inform the court of their next actions on the case.

Calida announced to the media that the counsels of petitioners agreed to the dismissal of the case during a closed-door conference with the justices.

On Monday, the solicitor general also suggested in a TV interview that the counsels of petitioners could face disbarment for filing the petition without the consent of the fishermen.

But Diokno accused the government of having a hand in the withdrawal of the petition by the fishermen and violating legal ethics by talking to their clients.

Diokno also insisted that the fishermen filed the petition "with full knowledge and consent because they want to freely fish in our own sea and have enough income to raise their families."

The IBP, through its new national president Domingo Cayosa, stood firm on the petition as it sought 10 days or until July 22 to again confer with the fishermen before complying with the Court's order to "move in the premises."

On Tuesday, the Court granted the IBP's plea for extension but gave them only until Friday, July 19, to comply with the order.



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SC issues gag order on WPS case litigants

By JOEL R. SAN JUAN [@jrsanjuan1573](#)

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday issued a gag order enjoining parties in the petition for the issuance of a writ of kalikasan in some parts of the West Philippine Sea from issuing statements about the case to the media.

The order was issued during the Court's regular en banc session and a day after Solicitor General Jose Calida warned that the lawyers involved in the petition may face disbarment over violations of legal ethics after they allegedly deceived petitioner-fishermen from Zambales and Palawan into signing the petition. The lawyers strongly denied Calida's claim.

The petition seeks to compel the government to protect and rehabilitate the Scarborough Shoal, Ayungin Shoal and

Mischief Reef, which China claims, and are within the Philippines's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Calida cited Section 27, Rule 138 of the Rules of Court which states: "A member of the Bar may be removed or suspended from his office by the Supreme Court for any deceit, malpractice or other gross misconduct in such office or for corruptly or willful appearing as an attorney for a party in a case without authority to do so." He added that the lawyers "were not authorized to file a case against the government agencies."

Calida alleged that the fishermen-petitioners were only told by their lawyers that the petition was against foreigners intruding in the country's water to fish. They were supposedly not informed the petition was against the government.

He added they were also told that the petition was also for their protection.

"Apparently, there is a gag order," SC Spokesman Atty. Brian Hosaka said in a text message.

"Furthermore, the SC en banc reminded the counsels of their obligations under the Code of Professional Responsibility and Rules of Court not to litigate their cases through their me-

dia or social media. Infractions shall be dealt with severely," he added.

Also during the en banc session, the Court granted the Integrated Bar of the Philippines's (IBP) plea to be given more time to comply with the Court's order to "move in premises" during the second round of the oral argument of the petition held last July 9.

"Petitioners were given until July 19, 2019, to confer with their clients and comply with the Supreme Court's order to move in the premises last July 9, 2019," Hosaka said in a statement.

Philippine jurisprudence defines a "move in the premises" as a directive for parties to inform the court of "developments pertinent to the case which may be of help to the Court in its immediate disposition."

The Court issued the "move in the premises" order after a closed-door conference with the parties last Tuesday, which was called after Calida manifested that the fishermen from Palawan and Zambales, who are the main petitioners in the case, have decided to withdraw from the petition.

The fishermen are being represented by lawyers from the IBP.



SC silences writ of kalikasan parties

By Hector Lawas

THE Supreme Court yesterday issued a gag order prohibiting parties in the writ of kalikasan petition compelling the government to protect the West Philippine Sea from further commenting on the merits and details of the case.

Covered by the gag order were counsels of peti-

tioner-fishermen, specifically defeated senatorial candidate Chel Diokno and Andres Palacios from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, and Solicitor General Jose Calida for the government.

The SC issued the order following public statements made by both camps after fishermen from Palawan and Zambales disowned the petition.

During oral arguments

last July 9, Calida submitted to the SC affidavits of fishermen saying they were unaware of the IBP's filing of the kalikasan petition on their behalf. Some of them even claimed they were made to sign a blank document by the IBP.

Calida had announced to the media that counsels of petitioners agreed to the dismissal of the case during a closed-door conference with the justices.

Last Monday, the solicitor general also suggested in a TV interview that the counsels of petitioners could face disbarment cases for filing the petition without the consent of the fishermen.

Diokno, for his part, accused the government of having a hand in the withdrawal of the petition by the fishermen and violating legal ethics by talking to their clients.



Court gives IBP ultimatum in writ of kalikasan case

THE Supreme Court has given an ultimatum to Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) lawyers to explain issues of fraud allegedly committed in the South China (West Philippine) Sea marine environment case.

During deliberations of the Supreme Court en banc on Tuesday, the IBP was given until July 19 "to move in the premises" and submit its compliance or motion whether it will pursue the case.

Whatever the IBP submits will be the basis whether oral arguments are conducted on July 23.

In a compliance, the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) asked the high court to junk a plea of the IBP lawyers to grant the latter more time to confer with its fishermen-clients and file a proper pleading.

The OSG had slammed the IBP for alleged fraud and misrepresentation for gathering signatures with-

out authority from the fishermen.

The high court has issued a gag order on lawyers of parties in a petition for a writ of *kalikasan* seeking to compel the government to protect disputed shoals in the West Philippine Sea from Chinese poachers.

During the court's deliberations on Tuesday, it ruled to order the petitioners from publicly commenting on issues involving the pending case.

This included losing Senate candidate and De La Salle University law dean Manuel "Chel" Diokno and Andres Palacios from the IBP and Solicitor General Jose Calida.

The Supreme Court issued the gag order over public statements made by both parties after fishermen from Palawan and Zambales said the petition was filed by the IBP without their consent.

JOMAR CANLAS



HEADLINES

News Briefs: July 17, 2019

Gov't eases flight restrictions to Kalibo, Caticlan

MANILA, Philippines — The government has ordered the immediate easing of flight restrictions to Boracay Island gateways Kalibo International Airport and Caticlan Airport.

This comes a month after the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) ordered a moratorium on all new and additional scheduled and charter flights to these airports to avoid overcrowding in Boracay, which was closed down and rehabilitated for six months last year.

In a resolution on June 15, the CAB said carriers with scheduled flights would be allowed to maintain their schedules without reduction for the rest of the International Air Transport Association summer season.

They are restricted, however, from mounting additional flights.

Meanwhile, charter flights will again be allowed at Kalibo and Caticlan airports, subject to certain conditions.

However, aircraft with more than a 200-seat capacity will not be allowed. —

Miguel R. Camus



STRATEGIC
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Air body lifts moratorium on Caticlan charter flights

By Darwin G. Amojelar

THE Civil Aeronautics Board said it is lifting the moratorium on charter flights to Kalibo and Caticlan airports subject to certain guidelines to preserve the environmental gains in the resort island of Boracay.

Under a new CAB resolution, carriers with scheduled flights will be allowed to maintain theirs without reduction for the rest of the International Air Transport Association summer season.

The airlines, however, are restricted from mounting additional flights.

Meanwhile, charter flights will again be allowed at Kalibo and Caticlan airports subject to conditions, including the filing of applications at least 30 days before the intended date of operation and the scheduling of operations on less congested days of the week as determined by the CAB.

The regulator said all air operators to Kalibo and Caticlan airports would not be allowed to use aircraft with more than a 200-seat capacity.

It said it would still monitor the extent of commercial air operations into Kalibo and Caticlan relative to the carrying capacity of Boracay Island for the purpose of reviewing and adjusting its guidelines.

The Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau of the Environment Department and the University of the Philippines-Los Baños determined in September 2018 that Boracay has a tourist-carrying capacity of 19,215 at any given time, or 6,405 arrivals a day based on an average three-day stay.

The CAB on June 10, 2019 ordered scheduled carriers to review their flight numbers for a possible scale-back and held charter applications in abeyance, after seeing more than an average of

7,000 daily passengers in April and May.

It said that in view of June arrivals data and trends in the past years, it determined that there was no reason to maintain the current flight restrictions.

Citing statistics from the Malay Tourism Office, the regulator saw a total of 189,444 tourists that entered Boracay in June, down from 222,330 in April and 221,138 in May. This translated into an average of 6,314 daily arrivals.

The annual trend in 2015 to 2017 suggests that this number may still go down, bottoming out in September, consistently the month with least visitor numbers representing an average decline of 44 percent from April peaks.

It could mean only around 4,200 tourists per day in September this year, irrespective of the mode of transportation taken.

Visitor arrivals are expected to recover until December, but only top off at 76 percent of the April average.

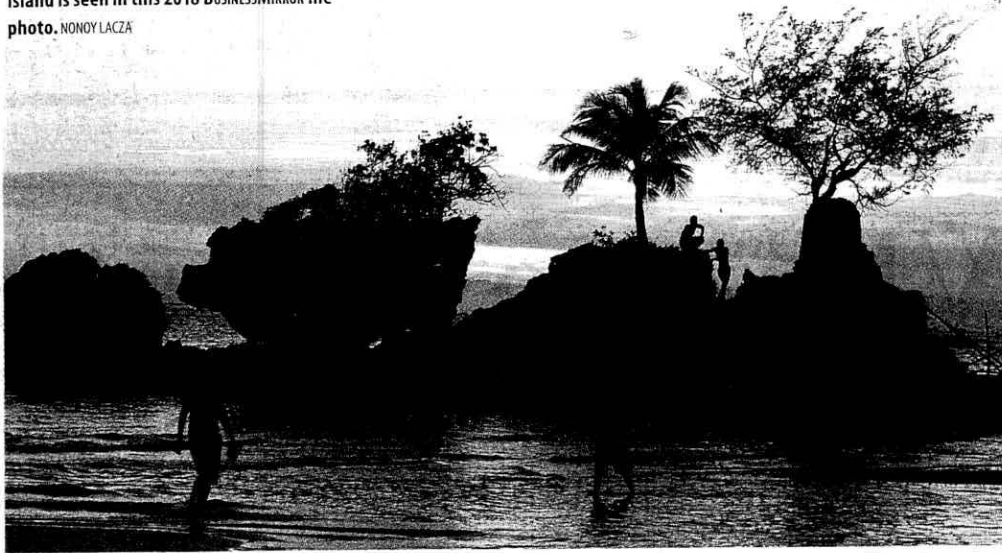


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SUNSET at the popular Willy's Rock in Boracay Island is seen in this 2018 BUSINESSMIRROR file photo. NONOYLACZA



C.A.B. CHANGES MIND, ALLOWS CHARTER FLIGHTS ANEW TO BORACAY GATEWAYS

By MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO

• @akosistellaBM

Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

THE Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) has lifted the moratorium on charter flights to Kalibo and Caticlan, both gateways to the Philippines's so-called crown jewel of tourism, Boracay Island.

The lifting comes after local tourism stakeholders pressed the Department of Tourism (DOT), whose secretary sits as CAB vice chairman, to undo the moratorium, counting billions of pesos in losses from booking cancellations in hotels in Boracay.

In a news statement sent to the BUSINESSMIRROR by CAB Executive Director Carmelo L. Arcilla, the agency also allowed carriers with scheduled flights to Kalibo and Caticlan to maintain their schedules for the rest of the Iata (International Air Transport Association) Summer Season, "but are restricted, however, from mounting additional flights."

Also, all air operators to these two cities "will not be allowed to use aircraft with more than a 200-seat capacity." The CAB resolution lifting the moratorium, effective immediately, was signed after a special board meeting on July 15, 2019.

Christine Ann U. Ibarreta, president of the Hotel Sales and Marketing Association Inc., welcomed CAB's decision lifting the moratorium: "We thank the DOT and CAB for listening to our side. Due to our constant dialogues, they came to appreciate our position and intention to grow the tourism industry. We hope for a more open and consultative process with relevant government agencies in the future."

Asked if the hotels would be able to get back their guests, she said, "we hope that our business partners [wholesalers] are still willing to gamble and rebook their guests."

SEE "CAB," A2

CAB...

CONTINUED FROM A1

Ibarreta earlier disclosed hotels and resorts in Boracay were projected to lose at least P2.21 billion from the sudden cancellation of bookings brought on by the CAB suspension of new and additional charter flights to Kalibo and Caticlan issued on June 19. The losses covered three months from July to September, considered the lean season on the island. (See, "Charter flights halt costs Boracay resorts P2 billion," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, June 27, 2019.)

Local stakeholders have yet to recover from the six-month closure of Boracay last year. About P30 billion in visitor receipts were estimated to have been lost from the closure.

Meanwhile, the CAB instructed carriers intending to mount new and additional charter flights to the Kalibo and Caticlan airports, to file their charter applications "at least 30 days before the intended date of operation, and the scheduling of operations on less congested days of the week as determined by the CAB."

The board stressed that it will continue to monitor the impact of the commercial air operations in these two airports on the carrying capacity of Boracay, to be able to review and adjust its guidelines as needed.

Last year, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources determined that the popular resort island of Boracay can only accommodate 19,215 tourists a day, at any given time, or 6,405 arrivals a day based on an average three-day stay.

Previous instances when tourist arrivals in Boracay exceeded 6,405 a day were not considered a violation by the DOT, as officials explained, the departures on the island on those days kept the carrying capacity within the 19,215 level. (See, "Boracay stakeholders fret over 'breaching' of daily arrivals cap," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, December 17, 2018.)

The CAB noted that an average of more than 7,000 tourists arrived on Boracay a day in April and May, and took to mean that breached the island's daily carrying capacity. This was the reason it suspended new and additional charter flights to Kalibo and Boracay, and ordered scheduled carriers to review their flight numbers for a possible scaleback.

"But in view of June arrivals data and trends in past years, the CAB has determined that there is no reason to maintain the current flight restrictions," the board stressed in its news statement.

According to data from the Malay Tourism Office cited by the CAB, tourists in Boracay dropped to 189,444 in June 2019, from 222,330 in April and 221,138 in May. This translates to an average of 6,314 daily arrivals.

"The annual trend in 2015-2017 suggests that this number may still go down, bottoming out in September, consistently the month with least visitor numbers [an average of 44 percent from April peaks]. This year, that can mean only around 4,200 tourists per day, irrespective of the mode of transportation taken. The tourist arrivals then recover until December, but only top off at 76 percent of the April average."

DoE defers order against SMPC coal trading

Under DoE's given conditions, the lifting of the CDO is valid for only 30 days from its issuance or until the DoE resolves SMPC's answer on the alleged illegal coal trading

By AJ Bajo

The Energy department has granted Semirara Mining and Power Corp.'s (SMPC) request to postpone the implementation of a cease and desist order (CDO) on the company's coal trading activities and operations.

The Department of Energy (DoE) on 4 June ordered the listed Consunjiled firm to halt coal operations pending the resolution on SMPC's alleged illegal coal trading operation in Pulpundan Port in Pulpundan, Negros Occidental.

It said SMPC violated the guidelines on the accreditation of coal traders and the registration of coal end-users under Department Circular DC2012-05-0006.

The CDO stemmed from an SMPC coal buyer's inability to secure a coal accreditation certificate from the DoE. In a filing to the stock exchange on 10 July, SMPC said it supplied coal to a buyer on 23 May for a trial shipment of 4,768.73 metric tons in order to "tap additional market." The buyer had said it has submitted and applied for accreditation with the DoE on 5 April.

However, the buyer was not able to submit the required accreditation in time with the shipment date as it was still at the DoE's office, SMPC said. The

business stopped trading with the buyer afterwards.

In a letter dated 12 July, SMPC said the DoE has granted its request to hold

the implementation of the order and the suspension of its coal trader accreditation subject to conditions. SMPC made the request "in order not to interrupt SMPC's ongoing coal trading activities and operations and renege on its contractual commitments and obligations to its coal buyers."

Still, SMPC is seeking to amend the conditions, which it says "might limit SMPC's compliance to its commitment per DoE approved work program."

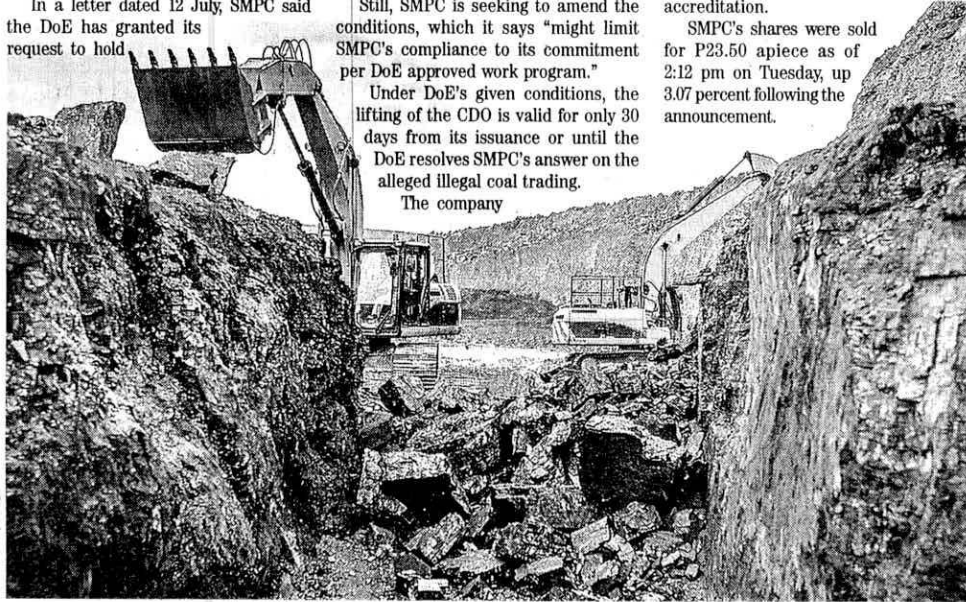
Under DoE's given conditions, the lifting of the CDO is valid for only 30 days from its issuance or until the DoE resolves SMPC's answer on the alleged illegal coal trading.

The company

is also barred from entering into new coal supply contracts or agreements, but is allowed to continue coal trading activities with its existing coal supply contracts or agreements.

Moreover, SMPC is also required to comply with the commitments and obligations under the coal trader accreditation.

SMPC's shares were sold for P23.50 apiece as of 2:12 pm on Tuesday, up 3.07 percent following the announcement.



WHILE DoE has barred SMPC from entering into new coal supply contracts, it is allowed to continue coal trading with its existing agreements.

DoE puts Semirara coal trading suspension order on hold

SEMIRARA Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) said the Energy department had granted the request of the Con-sunji-led listed company to put on hold an order issued last month for the suspension of its coal trading activities.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, the company said the Department of Energy (DoE) sent a letter putting on hold for 30 days the implementation of the agency's June 4 cease and desist order and suspension on its coal trading activities.

The deferred order is to start on Tuesday or until the DoE has resolved the company's verified answer, whichever comes earlier.

"SMPC shall continue its coal trading activities only on existing coal supply contracts/agreements," the company said, quoting the conditions set in the department's letter.

"SMPC shall not enter into new coal supply contracts/agreements," it added.

The company should also "faithfully comply with all its commitments and obligations under Coal Trader Accreditation No. CT-208-12-0351(R)."

Last week, SMPC disclosed that it was in talks with the Energy department for the lifting of the cease and desist order on its coal trading activities after issues arose when a buyer failed to produce the required accreditation.

The company narrated the background of the case, which started on May 23, 2019 with the supply of Semirara coal to a buyer. The trial shipment of 4,768.73 metric tons (MT) was aimed at tapping additional market with representation on the part of the buyer that it has submitted

and applied for a coal accreditation certificate with the DoE on April 5, 2019.

Under the rules, the DoE will issue the certificate of accreditation and/or registration or reject the application within 15 working days from receipt.

"Unfortunately, on shipment date, the buyer was unable to submit the said accreditation as it was still pending" with the DoE, SMPC said. "Thereafter, SMPC discontinued its supply and any trading with said buyer."

On July 5, 2019, SMPC said it had submitted its verified answer to the DoE with a prayer for the immediate lifting of the cease and desist order/suspension and for the non-imposition of any administrative fine.

On Tuesday, shares in SMPC rose 5.04% to close at P23.95 each. — **Victor V. Saulon**



Government must listen to its people: Primacy in our waters

By Amb. ALBERT DEL ROSARIO

(Opening remarks at Stratbase ADR Institute Forum, 12 July 2019.)

(Conclusion)

II. Inviting more questions

If there is an agreement with China to fish in our EEZ, either written or unwritten, we believe this raises the following vital questions:

1. Is this to be viewed as a successful Chinese invasion without a shot being fired?
2. Is this now a Philippine policy?
3. Is this not a clear violation of our Constitution that mandates our President and our military to defend what is ours?
4. To what extent will this adversely diminish or nullify what we had won in our arbitral tribunal victory?
5. To what extent will this embolden the Chinese militia vessels to further bully our fishermen? And what is to happen to our poor fishermen? Will our Filipino fishermen be continually persecuted or prevented from fishing in our West Philippine Sea?
6. Can we be assured that our lawful rights to oil and gas within our EEZ are being fully protected?
7. With China's artificial island building, the massive destruction of the marine environment and now this, how much faster will it take to exhaust the fish resources?
8. And when will we stop giving our northern neighbor primacy over that of our own people? When will Filipinos be FIRST and not LAST, in our own country?

III. Government must listen to its people

I think the Filipino people deserve answers to these questions.

The Government must listen to its people. Ninety-three (93) percent of Filipinos – [according to a recent Social Weather Stations/SWS survey] – think it is important for the Philippines to regain control of the artificial islands built by China in the West Philippine Sea. This 93% is four points higher than the December 2018 survey result, and steadily has been increasing.

Similarly, 92% of Filipinos think it is right to strengthen the Philippines' military capability, especially the Navy, and 83% of Filipinos support bringing these issues

to the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or other international organization.

In contrast, the same survey found that 80% of Filipinos were satisfied with President Duterte's performance.

IV. Exacting accountability

Given the current administration's decision to shelve the Award, former Ombudswoman Conchita Carpio-Morales and I took the initiative of filing a communication before the International Criminal Court on March 15, 2019 for the wrongful acts of Chinese officials not only against Filipinos, but also against our neighbors in the South China Sea. This ICC Communication is a means of enforcing the Award because it is meant to exact accountability for the actions committed by Chinese President Xi and others, already found unlawful by the Award.

Given the unfortunate decision to shelve the Award, it falls on us ordinary Filipinos to find creative and viable means to enforce the Award, so we may be able to defend and preserve our national patrimony – including our West Philippine Sea, not only for ourselves, but for our children and those yet unborn.

V. Threats of war

Finally, To the deep dismay of our people, however, our government has persisted in allowing China to deprive our citizens of what is ours by continuing to shelve the tribunal outcome. We are still succumbing to threats of force including a threat of war. Surprising as it may sound, according to Professor Amitav Acharya of the American University, war is not even a good option for China.

Its economy is heavily reliant on global trade, including its fuel supply, which needs open shipping lanes such as the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean which are dominated by US naval power.

With the recent clearer security guarantee definition provided by the US, it may not be necessary therefore to shrink to China's threat of war.



Bird strike sa NAIA

NAPILITANG bumalik sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport ang Cebu Pacific Air flight dahil sa bird strike, ilang minuto makaraang mag-take off patungong Cagayan de Oro kahapon.

Kinumpirma ng isang opisyal ng airport operations, ang CEB flight 5J381 na lumipad dakong alas-3:45 ng madaling araw ay bumalik sa NAIA matapos bumangga ang 'di pa mabatid na mga ibon sa makina ng eroplano.

Aniya, tumawag ang piloto sa Manila Control Tower na babalik ito sa paliparan saka humingi ng clearance para makapag-landing.

Base sa report, ligtas na nakalapag ang eroplano sa NAIA runway dakong alas-4:17 ng madaling araw.

Isa sa mga pasahero ng flight 5J381 si dating Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque na nag-post sa kanyang Facebook account na "there was a delay in take-off, then an explosion of sorts, smell of smoke and flight now returning to Manila."

Dagdag pa ni Roque, "CebuPac needs to take better care of its aircraft and its passengers. Paging Sec. Art Tugade and CAAP! Riding public needs your help!"

Ang mga pasahero ng flight 5J381 ay inilipat sa ibang eroplano at nakaalis dakong alas-6:58 ng umaga patungong Cagayan de Oro.

Samantala, nagsagawa ng imbestigasyon ang Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines kasama ang CEB aircraft engineers upang alamin kung gaano kalaki ang naging pinsala ng eroplano.

BENJIE VERGARA



The World's 2-billion-ton trash problem just got more alarming

By Ann Koh and Anuradha Raghu

THE STENCH of curdled milk wafted from a shipping container of waste at Malaysia's Port Klang as Environment Minister Yeo Bee Yin told a group of journalists in May she would send the maggot-infested rubbish back where it came from.

Ms. Yeo was voicing a concern that has spread across Southeast Asia, fueling a media storm over the dumping of rich countries' unwanted waste. About 5.8 million tons of trash was exported between January and November last year, led by shipments from the US, Japan, and Germany, according to Greenpeace.

Now governments across Asia are saying no to the imports, which for decades fed mills that recycled waste plastic. As more and more waste came, the importing countries faced a mounting problem of how to deal with tainted garbage that couldn't be easily recycled.

"Typically, 70% of a shipment can be processed, and the other 30% is contaminated with food," said Thomas Wong, manager of Impetus Conceptus Pte., a Singaporean company that shreds locally produced plastic waste before sending it to recycling mills in Malaysia and Vietnam. Contaminated trash is sent to incinerators and landfills for a fee, but some recyclers "just find a corner and burn it," Mr. Wong said. "The smoke smells just like palm oil, so they hide in a plantation and light up at night."

Greenpeace investigations in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand revealed illegal recycling, open burning, water contamination, and a rise in illnesses tied to pollution, the organization said in an April 23 report.

When China banned imports in January 2018, it started a domino effect. Shipments were diverted to Southeast Asia which soon became overwhelmed, forc-

ing governments to take action.

Malaysia announced a ban in October. Thailand stopped issuing import licences last year and will likely impose a ban in 2020, according to Yash Lohia, an executive director at Indorama Ventures Pcl., a Bangkok-based plastics producer and recycler. The Philippines said it was sending 69 containers of garbage back to Canada. Indonesia said it will tighten waste-import rules after discovering shipments containing toxic waste. India and Vietnam have also announced restrictions.

Malaysia's Ms. Yeo said garbage is still getting into the country in falsely declared cargoes, but the government hopes to stop the trade completely by the end of this year.

As Southeast Asia stops accepting the material, companies will look somewhere else, said Mr. Wong at Impetus Conceptus. "I think Africa will be next."

WASTE GENERATION IS RISING GLOBALLY

But social media have ensured public awareness of the problem in both developing countries and the wealthy nations that export the trash. That will make it increasingly difficult to export unwanted refuse.

"Everyone can voice their opinion on waste," said Indorama's Lohia. "That's when countries start taking this more seriously."

The long-term message for nations is clear: Deal with your own garbage.

But how to do that? Humans generated 2.01 billion tons of solid waste in 2016 and by 2050, that could rise to 3.4 billion tons, according to the World Bank. About 12% of all municipal waste in 2016 was plastic — 242 million tons of it.

The solution could lie in new technologies and a change in social behavior that reduces and even eliminates the need for landfills and incinerators. Here are some of the ways that companies, local authorities and startups around the

world are tackling the problem.

• MINE IT

Most rubbish ends up in a landfill or just chucked into the street to be washed away into rivers and oceans. In giant municipal dumps in countries such as India and Indonesia, informal "trash pickers," who live near or even on the mountains of rotting garbage, make a living from things they can sell.

Companies tap the methane gas produced by decomposing organic waste trapped in the dumps.

"We are sucking out the gas and using it to make electricity," said Sarun Tunwattanapong, who is building a five-megawatt power plant in Thailand next to a landfill in Nonthaburi province.

• BURN IT

Trash can be incinerated to produce electricity. In Singapore, the residual ash is dumped by barge to create a new island. But it's expensive. Dioxins and other emissions produced during burning need to be treated by electrostatic precipitators and lime powder. And it still produces greenhouse gases.

Solid waste can also be gasified at high temperatures using plasma torches to produce syngas, metals, and a glass-rock slag for paving roads. Maharashtra Enviro Power Ltd.'s plant in Pune, India, turns hazardous factory waste into feedstock for boilers.

• SCULPT IT

Artist Joseph-Francis Sumegne scoured rubbish dumps in the 1990s for junk to make the 12-meter-tall *New Statue of Liberty* monument in Douala, Cameroon. Filipino Oscar Villamiel salvaged thousands of doll heads and debris from a landfill in Manila to create the Payatas installation in 2012. This year, UK duo Tim Noble and Sue Webster's shadow 2002 waste sculpture *Real Life is Rubbish* was sold at auction at \$75,000.

"Infinite wealth, infinite detritus," said Bridget Tan, director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Arts and Galleries at Sin-



gapore's Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. "There's something to be said for the irony in the obscene excess of consumption."

• SORT IT

Sorting trash can be an unpleasant job, one reason why a lot of rubbish ends up in developing countries with lower wages.

But technology is increasingly automating the task and making it more efficient. Helsinki's Zen Robotics Ltd. has developed robots that grab wood and metal from

conveyor belts of trash. And in Angelholm, Sweden — ranked the country's best municipality for waste management — trash collection company NSR AB uses near-infrared beams to identify different types of plastic as the rubbish shoots along a belt. Jets of air remove the plastic items, leaving non-recyclable packaging and organic waste to head to an incinerator to produce power.

Artificial-intelligence systems are being developed to make the process more efficient. "Robots could be an interesting future alternative if they learn to identify plastic material types and if they can sort fast enough," said Pernilla Ringstrom, a manager at NSR, which collected 538 tons of plastic in 2018 that was made into composite ties for railways or sold to companies in Sweden and Germany.

One challenge is getting people to sort their waste at home. In Taiwan, garbage trucks play classical music tunes like Beethoven's *Fur Elise* to alert people to run down from their apartments. Plastics and aluminum cans get tossed into a white truck before it leaves while incineration waste goes into a yellow one.

The solution could lie in new technologies and a change in social behavior that reduces and even eliminates the need for landfills and incinerators.

• WASH IT

In Japan and Europe, recycling rates exceed those in Southeast Asia because citizens give their trash a quick rinse after pouring out leftover liquids, according to Impetus's Mr. Wong. Food, shampoo and coffee all prevent plastic waste from being recycled. "In Singapore, only 4% of plastics are recycled and the remaining 96% are thrown out," said Wong. "In Japan and Europe, people take more care and wash things, so their trash isn't as messy."

• EAT IT

Singapore's Taraph Technologies is one of the companies using bacteria or organic processes to tackle the issue. It's harnessing natural enzymes that digest plastics and turn them into chemicals normally produced in oil refineries. Mono-ethylene glycol from enzyme-eaten plastic bottles can be sold at prices 10 times higher than the value of trash, said Taraph co-founder Liew Mei Shan, who expects the technology to be commercially available in 5 to 10 years.

"Waste collection is a cost," said Liew. "If we can transform that into a revenue unit to cover expenses, it will become profitable for the collector."

• REPLACE IT

Startups and companies around the world are looking at alternatives to plastic, which has outpaced the production of almost every other material since the 1950s. Paper straws are making a comeback after widespread social-media campaigns. Food boxes and disposable cutlery are being made from grains or sugarcane waste. As more countries ban plastic bags, supermarkets are looking for other

ways to wrap groceries. In Vietnam, some are even wrapping vegetables and meat in banana leaves.

A more high-tech route is being taken by companies such as Netherlands-based Plantics BV, which is using plant-based resins made by polymerizing glycerol and citric acid that can be used instead of petrochemical-derived plastics.

Singapore-based RWDC Industries, which just raised \$35 million in two rounds of funding, has launched Solon, a biodegradable polymer produced by microbial fermentation of plant-based oils.

"Plastic takes seconds to produce, minutes to use, but takes centuries to degrade," said Zhao-tan Xiao, the company's president for Asia-Pacific. "Why are we making single-use disposables with something indestructible?"

• STOP IT

Ultimately, the best solution is to not produce any rubbish that can't be recycled. That's the aim of the residents of Kamikatsu, a mountainous village in Japan. Residents already wash oil off gyoza plastic packaging and sort their trash into 45 categories. Styrofoam and dirty plastic are made into lumps of solid fuel, which can be burned instead of coal. Polyester clothes are sold in a local second-hand shop. Clean plastic is taken away by companies such as Kao Corp. for recycling.

Akira Sakano, who heads the town's Zero Waste Academy, wants to go further. She's working on eliminating the village's waste production by 2020. One trial project asks detergent suppliers to set up a stall where people can refill washing-liquid bottles. At a community craft center, seamstresses stitch together a jacket out of red children's flags.

"We already have solutions in our hands," said Ms. Sakano. "Innovations like bioplastics and technology are necessary, but also how do we turn our knowledge of sustainable materials in our culture or community into modern life?"

BLOOMBERG



TITLE:

People make it so hard to ditch plastic straws

BY SCOTT DUKE KOMINERS | *Bloomberg Opinion*

RARELY has a minor consumer product received more vilification than the plastic straw. As a symbol of human wastefulness and our careless disregard for the environment, straws are the near-perfect villain. You use a plastic straw once and toss it, but it stays with us forever, sitting in a landfill, floating in the sea or harming wildlife. That's why some local governments like that of New York City have stopped allowing them, along with other single-use plastics. This seems like a perfectly reasonable thing to do, even though plastic straws comprise only a small part of the total volume of plastic disposed of each year.

But eliminating plastic straws offers a case study in how simple solutions can be devilishly tricky to implement—and sometimes even worse than the problems they were meant to solve. For that, we can largely thank ourselves and our behavioral quirks. Let's look at just one example: Some restaurants and bars have replaced their plastic straws with reusable metal variants. But there's a hitch, as the *New York Post* recently reported: customers keep taking the metal straws home with them.

This leaves restaurants holding the short straw, so to speak. Metal straws are expensive—perhaps a dollar apiece (or more) versus a penny or two for the plastic version—and so replacement costs add up quickly.

This might not be so problematic if the metal straws that customers walk off with get reused frequently. But most probably go on display as novelties or sit forgotten in a utensil drawer. And this means the metal straws—which presumably required mining, plus large amounts of energy to convert into sheet metal and then fashion it into a cylindrical tube—don't provide the intended environmental benefit.

I'm not aware of any research on the relative environmental costs of producing different types of straws. But the evidence on reusable grocery bags is not heartening.

Reusable bags take much more energy than single-use paper or plastic bags to make. As a result, they become an environmental plus only after a large number of uses—estimates suggest you need to use a reusable bag almost 40 times to break even in terms of environmental costs. Most reusable bags get lost, discarded or neglected in a closet before that milestone, undermining the case for them.

It would be surprising if the calculus for metal straws were any better. If metal straws get pilfered before they've been used enough, they may well be worse for the environment than their plastic peers.

So what's to be done? Economics offers a straightforward answer: instead of banning single-use plastics, the right strategy is to tax them.

Taxes force people to pay—or in econ-speak, internalize—their own environmental costs. This tends to lead people to change their behavior: with plastic taxes, everyone reduces usage on the margin, with those who get relatively lower value from single-use plastics reducing their usage more. Even small taxes can change behavior substantially: a 7 cent tax on all grocery bags in Chicago, for example, was associated with a 42 percent drop in usage.

We can calibrate taxes to match actual estimates of environmental harm. This helps make environmental concerns tangible and, in particular, makes people aware of which types of plastic are most harmful. Moreover, we can use the plastic tax revenue to support environmental causes, as Chicago and other cities have.

Of course, with these sorts of user and consumption taxes we have to be careful about inequality: the effective tax burden tends to fall more on those with lower incomes and/or those who need to use more plastic products. But tax-based policy can be designed to account for individual circumstances. For example, the high-end plastic bags in upscale grocery stores are often taxed more highly than bags at lower-cost stores. Meanwhile, some people have disabilities that mean they need to use straws; they could be exempted from the straw tax. Exempting these individuals from plastic straw bans would not help nearly as much, since under bans many restaurants will stop stocking plastic straws entirely.

So while it's true that reducing plastic straw usage might be an easy way to limit the harm we do to the environment, we need to make sure the limitations we place really are providing solutions. And that means taxes may be better than bans.



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EDITORIAL



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Some reef islands resilient to climate change

WELLINGTON—The Pacific's low-lying reef islands are likely to change shape in response to climate change, rather than simply sinking beneath rising seas and becoming uninhabitable as previously assumed, new research has found.

Atoll nations such as Tuvalu, Tokelau and Kiribati lie only a few meters above sea level and are considered the world's most vulnerable to global warming, with fears their populations will become climate refugees as waters rise.

But a study published this week found that such islands "morphodynamically respond" to the environment because they are com-

posed of the skeletal remains of tiny reef-dwelling organisms, rather than solid rock.

The researchers said evidence that such islands slowly change like shifting sands had profound implications for climate change planning in affected nations.

Co-author Murray Ford of Auckland University said low-lying reef islands appeared more resilient than previously thought.

"The effects on individual islands will vary so that while some areas may become uninhabitable, [other] areas will keep pace with rising seas," he said.

"It will be up to governments and communities to decide how to respond over time,

but we think this study highlights the fact that nature provides a template for adaptation and island communities may need to adapt too."

The study, conducted by researchers from New Zealand, Britain and Canada, was published by the Geological Society of America this week.

The researchers created a 1:50 scale model of Tuvalu's Fatato Island in a 66-foot flume tank to test the impact of rising seas and increasing storm surges caused by climate change.

They found the crest of the island became higher and the entire landmass shifted across the underlying reef. **AFP**