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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Gov't to invest P10b in 'vulnerable' provinces

DAVAO CITY—Some P10 billion worth of investments will be poured in provinces that are vulnerable to climate change, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu said here Wednesday.

Cimatu, also the chairperson of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction, was in the city for the pre-SONA (State of the Nation Address) forum.

Cimatu said the investments include agricultural and fisheries development, environmental protection and management, social welfare and livelihood development, water resources management, and infrastructure development.

"The government shall continue to pursue policy reforms that integrate climate and disaster risk considerations into development

policies, strategies, plans, and programs," he added.

Cimatu underscored the importance for farmers to better understand the effects of Climate Change and they must learn to adapt and reduce their vulnerability.

Together with DENR, he said the Department of Agriculture will conduct "climate-smart" farm business training nationwide, while the Department of Agrarian Reform will scale-up assistance to agrarian reform beneficiaries to enhance their resiliency.

The Department of Budget and Management, meanwhile, will enhance access to financial resources, Cimatu said, while convergence programming and budgeting will also be pursued with national government agencies and local governments of climate-vulnerable provinces. PNA



Boracay rehab needs more time, says group

As flash floods hit Aklan resort island, task force asks tourists, residents to expect problems due to road and sewage work

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
@inquirervisayas

ILOILO CITY—Bear with us. This was the appeal of the interagency task force managing the rehabilitation of Boracay after flash floods hit on Tuesday, saying it needed more time to complete fixing the road network and drainage and sewage systems on the resort island.

“We appeal to tourists and residents of Boracay that the flooding we are experiencing is basically caused by the ongoing construction of the rehabilitated drainage system. We are still not done will all these projects [which] will be completed in the middle of next year,” Natividad Bernardino, general manager of the Boracay Interagency Rehabilitation Management Group, said in a press conference broadcast from the island on Wednesday.

Pains, sacrifices

“In the meantime ... we need to bear many pains and sacrifices,” Bernardino added.

Images of tourists and residents wading in floodwaters up to 1 meter (3 feet) at the height of the downpour were posted on Facebook. Heavy rains also triggered flash



BUMPY RIDE Tourists and residents endure a bumpy ride as repair work continues at a section of Boracay Island's main road in this photo taken in May. —NESTOR BURGOS JR.

floods on the island in May.

Representatives of the Department of Public Works and Highways, Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, and water service providers Boracay Tubi System Inc. and Boracay Island Water Company Inc. gave updates on ongoing projects during the press conference.

Tuesday's flooding, triggered by enhanced monsoon rains due to Tropical Depression “Falcon,” hit a portion of the main road near Ambassador Hotel in Barangay Bal-

abag, D'Mall commercial complex and Bloomfield Road in Sitio Bulabog in Balabag.

Mitigating measures

Bernardino said drainage pipes in some areas had been plugged due to ongoing construction of the drainage system.

“What we can do at the moment is to undertake mitigating measures,” she said. These include putting up pumps, temporary outfalls and drainage canals, especially in low-lying and flood-prone areas.

Bernardino said they expect-

ted the situation to improve significantly once the drainage project was completed.

President Duterte ordered the closure of the island to tourists for six months last year, from April 26 to Oct. 25, to undergo rehabilitation amid worsening environmental and other problems.

But rehabilitation activities, including the upgrading of the main road and drainage and sewage systems, remain unfinished, with several projects set for completion in 2020 and 2021.

Problems persist

The closure and rehabilitation displaced 30,000 workers and residents dependent on tourism for their livelihood. Small business were also forced to closed down.

Residents said problems remained on the island despite the closure.

“After six months of total closure promising to fix [the island, the situation] has become worse. For that six months of forced closure, we lost a lot of business ... and today, we are made to suffer further with the flood affecting our businesses,” designer PJ Arañador, a business owner on the island, said in a Facebook post. INQ



1/2

TONIGHT

OPINION

'UNCOVERED'

Giyera kontra basura!



**NI MARLON
PURIFICACION**

MULING bumalik ang sandamakmak na basura sa Manila Bay sa gitna ng walang humpay na ulan na likha ng habagat mula sa bagyong Falcon.

Karamihan sa mga basurang ito ay hindi na galing sa mga malalapit na establisimyento kundi sa iba't ibang bayan o lugar na tinangay ng malalakas na alon at hangin.

Walang duda na seryoso ang pamahalaan sa ginagawang paglilinis sa kapaligiran, hindi lamang sa Manila Bay kundi sa iba pang lugar sa ating bayan.

Nangunguna sa paglilinis na ito ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) at iba pang lokal na ahensiya ng pamahalaan.

Ilang non-government organizations ang nagpahayag na rin ng pagkilala sa programang to ng pamahalaan na unila'y malaking tulong upang mapangalagaan ang ating kapaligiran.

Ayon sa Greenpeace Philippines, hindi lamang

sa 'nakikitang basura' dapat mag-concentrate ang pamahalaan sa pagsasagawa ng kalinisan kundi dapat ay alamin din ang iba pang pinagmumulan ng mga nakarimirim na dumi.

Una nang sinabi ni Greenpeace regional oceans campaigner na si Sonny Batungbacal na malaking problema rin sa Manila Bay ang mga basura na hindi nakikita, lalo na ang mga natutunaw o katas ng basura na nagbibigay ng maraming bakterya.

Isa rin ito sa dapat sa pagtuunan ng pansin at tama ang ginagawa ng DENR na ipasara ang mga establisimyento na hindi sumusunod sa Clean Water Act at mga patakaran o pamantayan sa batas sa pagpapanatili ng kaayusan sa ating kalikasan.

Nakahanap din ng panibagong kakampi ang DENR, MMDA at LLDA sa katauhan ni bagong upong Manila Mayor Isko Moreno na nagsabing ang kanyang pamunuan ay makikiisa sa paglaban at paglilis sa mga basura sa buong lungsod.

Pag-upo pa lang ni Mayor Isko nitong buwan ng Hulyo, ramdam agad ang ipinatutupad nitong paglilis sa kapaligiran. Unang-una na siyempre ang ginawa nitong paglilis sa buong Divisoria na hindi lamang 'trapik' ang nililikha ng mga illegal vendor sa lugar kundi sanhi rin sila sa pagbabara sa mga kanal, estero at drainage sa buong Recto Avenue, Juan Luna, Sta. Cruz at ilang bahagi ng Tondo.

Magkasabay na sinabi

ng DENR at MMDA na limitado lamang ang kanilang kapangyarihan upang sawatahin ang ilang pasaway na establisimyento na walang sapat na 'water treatment facility' sa pagtatapon ng kanilang dumi.

Kaya malaking bagay ang ipinakitang suporta ni Mayor Isko ngayon dahil maaari nitong tanggalan ng lisensiya ang mga establisimyentong walang sariling 'drainage system.'

Pero sa mga nakitang basura sa Manila Bay kamakalawa, hindi na ito usapin ng mga pasaway na business establishments, kundi patunay din ito na maraming dapat silipin kung saan pa at bakit nagkakaroon ng sandamakmak na basura.

At ang problemang ito ay hindi na rin kaya mismo ng DENR, MMDA at Manila City Hall kundi dapat ay marami pang alkalde na tulad ni Mayor Isko ang makipagtulungan sa national government.

Mahalaga ang papel ng pamahalaang lokal sa paglilinis sa basura. Sa pamamagitan ng bawat alkalde, maaaring itong manduhan o pagsabihan ang mga barangay official na pabaya sa pananatili ng kalinisan sa kani-kanilang lugar.

Dapat, kung may giyera kontra droga hanggang sa barangay, magkaroon din ng giyera laban sa basura.

Kung magseseryoso lamang ang bawat LGU's sa kampanya laban sa basura, malaking tulong kung uumpisahan sa mga barangay ang paglilinis sa kani-kanilang lugar.

May tinatawag na 'zone' o 'purok' sa magkakalapit na barangay. Sila iyong grupo ng magkakatabing barangay na puwedeng magtutungan o magbantayan sa isa't isa.

Kung tingin ng isang barangay na mula sa katabi nilang barangay nagmumula ang dumi, basura at likha ng mga barado nilang kanal, puwede silang mag-usap, mag-coordinate at magkasundo nang mapanatiling malinis ang kanilang lugar.

bagay din ang kooperasyon nating lahat.

Dapat, sa tagal na panahon nating ipinatutupad ang 'waste sorting' o 'garbage segregation,' bawat bahay ngayon ay sumusunod dapat sa patakaran ihilwalay ang mga basurang nabubulok sa mga hindi nabubulok.

Maging episyente ang paghahakot sa basura. Sa ibang bansa, tulad sa Winnipeg, Canada, ibang truck ng basura ang humahakot sa mga basurang nabubulok at iba rin ang kumukuha sa mga 'recyclable garbage.'

At ito ay nasa takdang oras o araw.

Alam nating malaking problema ang mga 'illegal settler,' na kalimitang sanhi rin ng hindi maayos na pagtatapon ng basura at pagbabara sa ating mga estero o kanal.

Hindi ganoon kadali para tugunan ang problema sa pabahay.

Ngunit kung 'matino' ang programa ng bawat barangay na...

Sundan sa Pahina 12



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

2/2

GIYERA

Mula Pahina 5

...nakasasakop sa kanila, sila mismo ay dapat turuan ng tamang asal sa pagtatapon ng dumi at basura.

Idagdag pa natin ang mga naglalakihang gusali at establisimyento na sila mismo ang nakababara sa ating mga kanal. Sa pangil at kapangyarihan ng bawat LGU's— katuwang ang mga barangay na nakasasakop sa kanila— maaari silang kastiguhin, papanagutin at puwersahing ayusin ang mali nilang istraktura.

Dapat, ang bawat 'sanggunian' ng LGU — mapa-lungsod, bayan o lalawigan man — ay magkaroon ng komite o departamento na walang ibang gagawin kundi tumutok sa problema sa basura, baha at 'illegal settlers.'

Kawing-kawing ang problemang iyan na dapat ay mayroong magtitimon sa bawat LGU, katuwang ang mga kalapit na bayan,

lungsod at probinsiya.

Higit sa lahat, malaking tulong din ang 'social media' para ilantad sa publiko ang mga lugar na nagiging sanhi ng baha at may sandamakmak na basura.

Siguro, kung may pa-contest ang lokal na pamahalaan na magbibigay gantimpala sa sinumang 'netizens' na magpapaskil ng mga larawan at detalyeng may problema sa koleksiyon ng basura, malaking bagay ito upang mahikayat ang lahat na sumali.

Dapat ay may 'reward and recognition' din sa mga 'malilinis na barangay.' Malinis na sa droga, malinis pa sa basura!

At panghuli, dapat ay magkaroon ng malinis na 'urban planning' sa pagsasaayos sa ating drainage system.

Dapat habang nag-iisip tayo ng panandaliang soluyson o 'band aid solution,' may malinaw, kongkreto at maayos din tayong 'long term solution,' kontra baha at basura.

At sana mangyari ito, now na!



Editorial

Basurang itinapon, ibinalik ng alon

MAHIGIT anim na buwan nang nililinis ang Manila Bay. Marami na ring mga restaurant at iba pang establishments ang ipinasara dahil sa pagtatapon ng kanilang basura sa dagat. Naging abala ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay at pinagbawalan pa ang mga tao na huwag lumusong at maligo sapagkat sobrang dumi ng tubig. Hindi lamang mga basurang plastic ang nasa Manila Bay kundi pati dumi ng tao at hayop. Nagmistulang malaking inidoro ang dating hinahangaang Manila Bay.

Sa kabila ng paglilinis ng DENR at iba pang civic group sa Manila Bay, wala pa ring pagbabago at patuloy pa rin ang pagtatapon ng basura sa lawa. Kamakalawa, tambak ng basura ang makikita sa kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard. Iba't ibang klase ng basurang plastic ang isinuka — shopping bags, sachet ng 3 and 1 coffee, shampoo, ketsup, sako ng bigas, botelya ng softdrinks, cup ng noodles, sirang silya, putol-putol na kahoy, katawan at dahon ng saging at marami pang basura.

Tuwig may bagyo at malaki ang alon, tiyak na ibabalik ang mga basurang itinapon. Ayon sa report, ang mga basura ay galing sa mga informal settlers o squatters na nakatira sa baybayin ng Manila Bay. Sa Baseco compound may pinakamaraming informal settlers at wala silang pakundangan kung magtapon ng basura. Hagis na lang sila nang hakis. Ang mga nakatira sa estero ay ganundin ang ginagawa kaya hindi na umaagos ang tubig. Mula sa estero, tatangayin ang basura sa Manila Bay.

Sa Manila Bay din humahantong ang mga basurang itinapon ng mga taga-Cavite at Bataan. Ang itinapon nila, mga taga-Metro Manila ang nagpapasan at namumroblema.

Mas magandang gawin ng DENR ay unahin muna ang alisin ang informal settlers sa baybayin ng Manila Bay. Kahit linisin nang linisin ang Manila Bay kung marami pa ring squatters, balewala rin. Katulungin ang local government unit ng Maynila. Ngayong masipag ang mayor ng Maynila na si Isko Moreno, tiyak na mapapadali ang paglilipat sa mga iskuwater para mawala na ang mga magtatapon ng basura. Suwetuhin naman ng DILG ang mga LGU ng mga Cavite at Bataan para ipagbawal ang pagtatapon ng basura sa karagatan na humahantong sa Manila Bay. Magkaroon sana ng disiplina sa pagtatapon ng basura.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

ALG
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

19 JUL 2019
DATE

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____



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YOUNG AND DARING Children throw all caution to the wind and jump into Manila Bay despite strong waves caused by heavy rains dumped by Tropical Storm "Falcon." Classes in parts of Metro Manila and nearby provinces remain suspended as the weather disturbance continues to enhance the southwest monsoon. —AP

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19 JUL 2019

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

8 nabbed for dumping trash in Ecija market

By **STEVE A. GOSUICO**

SAN ANTONIO, Nueva Ecija – Six men and two women allegedly on board separate tricycles were arrested for illegally dumping garbage in the vicinity of the public market on Wednesday here.

Town police head Maj. Arnel Aguilar identified those eight nabbed as Juan De Jesus Jr., of Bgy. Tikiw; Michael Sulit, 21, of Bgy.

Maugat; Juanito Bernardo, 53, and Elenita Bernardo, 53, both of Bgy. Luyos; Rodel Cruz, 52, of Bgy. Julo; Bobby Villarico; Marianet Sonza, 49, and Mark Frances Mina, 23, of Bgy. Maugat.

Aguilar said patrol enforcers of the municipal hall caught the suspects one by one while dumping waste materials at the public market in Bgy. Poblacion between 1 a.m. to 3 a.m.

“Naka-tricycle sila at doon nakakarga ang mga

basura tapos tinatapon nila sa palengke nang mahuli sila, madalas daw nila ginagawa yun ngayun lang sila nahuli,” Aguilar told this reporter in a phone interview yesterday.

Aguilar said municipal environment and natural resources officer George Santiago brought the suspects to the police station for proper disposition and the filing of charges against them for violation of Republic Act 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000).



Expert warns pangolins may be extinct in next two years

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

@jonlmayuga

AN American wildlife law-enforcement expert has warned that pangolins may become extinct sooner than later unless authorities step up their efforts to effectively stop the illegal trade of the critically endangered animal.

George Phocas, formerly of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (US-FWS), said that Pangolin, arguably now the most illegally traded species in the world is facing extinction, possibly in the next two years because of the massive harvesting of these ant-eating species from the wilderness of Africa and Asia where they are known only to occur.

Interviewed by the BUSINESSMIRROR on Wednesday at the sidelines of the Conference on Wildlife Forensics as A Tool to Combat Wildlife Trafficking held in Mandaue City, Cebu, from July 16 to 18, Phocas said recent reports of dead pangolin seized by authorities are cause for alarm.

Phocas has extensive experience working with various law-enforcement agencies in Asia under the US-FWS international attache program prior to his retirement. He has also worked on the pangolin case for five years in the Philippines.

He lamented that his first pangolin trafficking case in his career doing undercover sleuthing against wildlife traffickers failed to gain traction back then because of perceived "insignificance."

Global concern

TODAY, he said there is a global concern for the pangolins and law enforcement must work harder to stop the illegal activities that target this particular species in the wild.

There are only eight known pangolin species in the world—four are in Africa and four in Asia, including the Philippines—the Palawan or Philippine pangolin, scientifically called *Manis culionensis*, a species endemic to Palawan Island.

Hunted for its meat, scale, internal organs, including testicles, pangolins are believed to be miracle cures to various ailments, with meat as food, and parts used for traditional medicine with China and Vietnam being major buyers. Their perceived health benefits, specially as an aphrodisiac, is reportedly boosting the illegal trade of this species.

Vanishing species

ACCORDING to the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Palawan pangolin, a scaly anteater that feeds of termites and ants is an elusive animal and little is known about their behavior in the wild.

This shy mammal has a voracious appetite for pesky termites and ants, hence, their extinction could cause an ecological imbalance, possibly an increase in the population of these potentially pesky insects.

The least studied among pangolin species in the world, the Palawan pangolin was just recently declared as distinct from the Sunda pangolin that it was earlier thought to be. It is now the subject of conservation efforts by authorities and wildlife conservation groups based in Palawan, considered as the country's last ecological frontier, where communities admitted that hunting animals for food, medicine and pet trade along with other forest products is a way life.



SOLVING GARBAGE PROBLEM

CLEANING DAGUPAN'S STREETS IS MAYOR'S FIRST TASK

By Yolanda Sotelo
@yzsoteloINQ

DAGUPAN CITY—Hauling uncollected trash and clearing streets of vendors have been the first order of Mayor Marc Brian Lim, who vowed to solve the city's worsening garbage problem as soon as he assumed his post.

Lim directed the city waste division to clean the streets, sending water trucks to hose down and flush out mud along the city's main thoroughfares and public markets.

In the last two weeks, more than 16 truckloads of garbage had been collected from public markets and roadsides, said Teddy Villamil, a consultant of the city government on waste management.

The city's antihawking division also had its hands full in clearing the streets of vendors who had occupied the sidewalks and the roads, making it difficult



ALL CLEAR A worker in Dagupan City hoses down a spot at the back of Magsaysay Market where garbage used to pile up. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

for vehicles to pass through.

Less than a month after Lim officially took over the reins of the city government, the streets had been cleaned and cleared of obstructions.

Nothing extraordinary

But Lim said there was nothing extraordinary about this.

"As the local chief executive, part of my responsibility is to maintain the upkeep of the city, especially the public markets ...

because these are susceptible to waste that can pile up," he said.

Idle MRFs

He said rehabilitating the streets is a concerted effort of various City Hall departments and some barangay officials.

According to Lim, the garbage problem persists in spite of the availability of the materials recovery facilities (MRFs) in 31 villages.

He said most of the MRFs

have been idle and some have been turned into a storage for construction material debris. Lim said part of solving the garbage woes is to make MRFs operational again.

Segregation

"The MRFs are useless if households do not segregate their garbage ... Without segregation, mixed garbage piles up at the MRF and when collected and brought to the open dump [in Bonuan], which is illegal as it had been ordered closed, the situation there gets worse," Lim said.

The more than 50-year-old open dump was ordered closed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in January 2017.

He said his administration has no other option but to continue using the dump "because we came into office when there was no long-term plan, so we are starting from zero." INQ



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6
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

19 JUL 2019

DATE

Barangay execs decry mining company's blasting operations

By MINERVA BC NEWMANO

CEBU CITY – Officials of Barangay Biga in Toledo City have filed an environmental complaint to the Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau (MGB) against Carmen Copper Corporation (CCC) whose blasting activities they said damaged houses and affected the groundwater supply of the village.

Biga Barangay Captain Pedro Sepada Jr. with the Biga women's association Namabi and Mabirwa told MGB OIC-Regional Director Efren Carido blasting operations occur twice a day and conducted about 350 meters away from a human settlement.

In a Kapihan sa PIA forum Wednesday, Carido said MGB has formed a team composed of local environmental experts to investigate the complaints of the residents.

MGB Central Visayas head of the re-

search Armando Malicse told Manila Bulletin Sepada is not calling for the closure of mining company.

"They just want to know what are the programs of Carmen Copper to answer to the barangay residents' complaints," Malicse said.

The Biga officials want to ensure that mine wastes are properly stored and disposed, that their human rights are respected and that the barangay's income will improve from mine waste fees.

The residents told the team the blasts left cracks on their walls and floors. They also said the spring that was their water source had dried up.

They also alleged that CCC had not been transparent about its spending for its Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) and its gross income.

The residents said that contrary to what was promised by the mining firm, only a few of them benefitted from the al-

ternative livelihood assistance from CCC.

Maricris Libre, Mabirwa president, said that when CCC re-opened the Atlas mine, affected Biga residents were promised relocation assistance. The livelihood assistance had not been enough to enable the residents to make ends meet, Libre said.

The mining firm gave each household ₱2,000 as relocation assistance and a few pieces of wood, which were not enough for a decent dwelling, Libre said.

"We think both parties are not communicating well. There is a need for them to meet," Malicse said. A technical conference was scheduled for July 23 between Carmen Copper and Biga officials with the MGB as conflict mediator.

Malicse said CCC was given 15 days to answer the complaints.

CCC's operational area covers 1,676 hectares, affecting the barangays of Don Anores Soriano, Media Once, Biga, Bagakayand Loay in Toledo City.



Cabinet vows greater impact in Duterte's last 3 years

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY - With three more years before President Duterte steps down, members of his Cabinet have vowed to make a greater impact on the lives of Filipinos.

"We all work together in our respective departments and we will come up with something that would have a great impact on the people," Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said during the pre-State of the Nation Address (SONA) forum held at the SMX Convention Center here in Davao City the other day.

Nograles said the clustering of the different Cabinet departments helped make effective the execution of tasks and plans directed toward the goals of the Duterte administration.

Duterte reorganized the Cabinet cluster system through Executive Order 24, which he signed in 2017.

The EO reorganized the clusters into participatory governance, infrastructure, human development and poverty reduc-

tion, and security, justice and peace (SJPC).

Other clusters are the climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction (CCAMDRRC); and economic development.

This reorganization expands the number of Cabinet clusters to six, from former president Benigno Aquino III's original five clusters.

Meanwhile, a few days before the President delivers his fourth SONA on Monday, CCAMDRRC and SJPC held the pre-SONA forum here led by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

The Wednesday forum was the final installment of the three-part pre-SONA forum, dubbed "Tatak ng Pagbabago 2019," which aims at discussing the package of policies and programs that the Duterte administration pursued in the past three years.

Aside from giving updates on the government's key policies, the pre-SONA forum gave a view of the accomplishments of the Duterte administration at midterm.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



3
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

19 JUL 2019

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

Duterte lauds Cabinet work

President Duterte is apparently pleased with the performance of his Cabinet that includes many retired military officers.

"All my Cabinet members are really good and honest men," the President said during a television program of evangelist Apollo Quiboloy last Wednesday, ahead of his fourth State-of-the-Nation Address before a joint session of Congress at the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City on Monday.

The President, a former Davao City mayor, explained that he chose military men to join the Cabinet due

to integrity and competence. He noted that he knew these former military officers when they were assigned in Mindanao. "Kaibigan nga namin ni Pastor karamihan diyan eh. And they know me, my entrails, at alam ko 'yung ano nila," he added.

"Police, military. Pagka-corrupt ka, corrupt 'yan lahat pero for as long as you stay nose clean, you can expect everybody will follow," he said.

Duterte explained that that former military men follow orders and get the job done, citing the efficient cleanup and rehabilitation of

Boracay as well as the land reform project on the island.

Unlike military men, he noted that some civilian personnel tend to question his orders and delay the project implementation. "Dito naman sa bureaucracy, and I don't - this is not really a brief against you, mga critic. May inutos ka na, makipagdebate pa sa iyo. 'Sir, ganito, sir. Sir, ganun.' Pagkatapos, 'O, siges, siges na,'" he said.

The President admitted there will be some changes in the Cabinet. Duterte said Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol will be transferred

to head the Mindanao Development Authority to serve as his point man to spur the development of the new Bangsamoro autonomous region.

He said he was "scouting" for a military man to take the place of Piñol at the Agriculture department. "I assume maybe again a military man. Kasi madali mag-utos, mag-trabaho. And they do it without a question. Kaya sabi ko sa kanya, when I tell you do this and do that, do not question me because I will never give you an order to do something that is illegal," he said.

(Genalyn Kabiling)



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

SONA 2019

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

What has been delivered

- Between January and July 2019, the most number of trains that were operational in a day was 16.
- Out of 75 flagship projects identified, 37 projects approved by Investment Coordination Committee and confirmed by the National Economic and Development Authority board as of April 30.
- 25 projects expected to be completed by end of Duterte term; 24 in development stage; 46 in implementation stage; 11 in construction stage.
- Groundbreaking for Metro Manila subway project held February 2019.
- First package of Philippine National Railways' Clark Phase 1 project, launched in May 2019.
- Expansion of Clark International Airport is ongoing; 47.02 percent done as of January 2019.
- Mindanao Rail Project Phase 1 is still in the budgeting/financing stage.
- In June 2019, the President orders immediate transfer of domestic flight operations to Sangley Point, Cavite, to ease Naia congestion. There is also a proposal to build an airport in Bulacan.
- Government keen on tapping state-owned Chinese infrastructure contractor China First Highway Engineering Co. Ltd. (CFHEC) to help rehabilitate the waterway, Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission signed on March 22 a memorandum of understanding with CFHEC to undertake feasibility study.
- \$500-million Metro Manila Flood Control Management Project launched in January 2018, partly funded by World Bank and China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for \$207.6 million each. Remaining \$84.7 million would be funded by government. Project slated for completion in 2024 to benefit mainly Marikina and Quezon City residents. Other ongoing projects include Pasig-Marikina river channel improvement and Mandaluyong main drainage project (phase 2 started in 2014).
- Skyway Stage 3, which will divert 100,000 vehicles away from Edsa and cut travel time between Makati and Quezon City, expected to be finished by end of 2019, with a few ramps opened. Another Metro Manila elevated connector road and the 32.6-km Southeast Metro Manila Expressway (C6) Project would remove another 100,000 cars from Edsa. Both projects are expected to be completed by 2021.

Aboitiz Group plants 95K seedlings

Our greening efforts and the care we exert to our ecosystem demonstrate our core value of responsibility

A simultaneous tree-planting activity was launched by the Aboitiz Group involving 5,000 of its personnel in 22 sites nationwide where they planted about 95,000 seedlings.

Erramon Aboitiz, president and chief executive officer of Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., said the activity was part of the group's commitment to protect the environment and promote social responsibility.

"Our greening efforts and the care we exert to our ecosystem demonstrate our core value of responsibility," Aboitiz told volunteers across multiple planting sites via live feed from Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac where Manila-based Aboitiz team members planted approximately 20,000 seedlings of narra, guyabano and mango.

"The responsibility we have for each other and the generation we will bequeath our planet to," he added.

About 5,000 Aboitiz team members from various parts of the country joined in the activity held last Saturday.

The single-day initiative was part of A-Park, the Aboitiz Group's largest environmental program that supports the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP).

Philippine Army Mechanized Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Robert Daus said the ENGP paved the way for a harmonious relationship between government agencies and the private sector in protecting and preserving the country's ecosystem.

"Our simultaneous tree planting with the Aboitiz Group as lead agency in partnership with Pilmico, DENR, and Training and Doctrine Command is a demonstration of our strong commitment to the ENGP... your Armed Forces of the Philippines is one of your active partners in this very important undertaking

towards a greener Philippines," Daus noted.

Launched in 2010, the initial goal of A-Park was to plant three million trees by 2015. Aboitiz readily surpassed that goal and raised its target to nine million trees by 2020. As of 2018, the group has planted 6.6 million trees all over the Philippines.

The program is also aligned with the Aboitiz Group's commitment to environmental stewardship, particularly focused on carbon emission reduction while providing livelihood opportunities to its host communities. Aboitiz usually taps locals to monitor the survival rate of the planted seedlings.

The planting of nine million trees would mean the conversion of an estimated 189,000 tons of carbon dioxide into oxygen or the equivalent of about 9,000 hectares of lush reforested areas, or more than 37 times the size of Bonifacio Global City.

"We are truly proud of our A-People, all of you, for the positive impact you make on our host communities through our reforestation activities," Aboitiz said



Care for Mother Earth Erramon Aboitiz, president and chief executive officer of Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., and Maj. Gen. Romeo Daus lead the tree-planting activity at Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

19 JUL 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Nickel miners plant 5.3 million trees in Caraga and Palawan

THE Philippine Nickel Industry Association, through its seven member-companies, has once again boosted greening efforts as part of ongoing rehabilitation and reforestation in their respective mining areas.

Ensuring environmental and ecological sustainability in areas where nickel is mined, members of the Philippine nickel industry have planted an estimated 5.3 million trees to date in the Caraga region and in Palawan as part of its Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program.

The number of trees planted has risen 27% since PNIA's report of planting 4.2 million trees in June 2018.

"The nickel mining industry has real and continuing accomplishments in caring not only for our communities, but also of the environment. We contribute at least 3 to 5% of our operating cost to EPEP programs. No other industry is mandated to do this," says PNIA Executive Director Charmaine Olea-Capili.

On top of current reforestation efforts, mining companies are mandated to implement the Temporary Revegetation Program. PNIA member companies have planted over 284 hectares of various vegetation and spent P45 million, the group said.

"We are required to plant 100 trees for every tree we cut down. Our industry has made continued efforts to rehabilitate the areas where we mine since we started operations. With the

ongoing TRP, we can provide short term vegetation growth that can control soil erosion and assist communities during natural calamities," Capili added.



Employees of Marventures Mining and Development Corp. work at the mine's nursery, caring for seedlings of various species used in rehabilitation and reforestation program.



Puerto Galera shores up town's marine ecology

PUERTO Galera, one of the country's top diving spots, can expect to have cleaner seas and a more balanced marine ecosystem with the recent partnership sealed by the municipal government and the Metro Pacific Investments Foundation Inc.

The corporate social responsibility arm of the MVP Group of Companies, the Foundation has committed P1.5 million for three years under its Shore It Up program to provide local Bantay Dagat in the form of technical know-how, monthly allowances, uniforms, and scuba diving courses and equipment to better protect and conserve the town's aquatic resources.

To be called Marine Protection, Inspection and Conservation Guardians, the volunteers will also be empowered by the municipal government in their marine enforcement and monitoring activities.

The conglomerate made its initial foray into Puerto Galera in 2010 when it pioneered a comprehensive underwater and coastal cleanup drive, followed up in 2013 by another scuba cleanup and the Junior Environmental Scouts, an education component for public school children.

The recent Shore It Up drew 145 scuba volunteer divers, who collected 616 kilos of garbage from various dive spots, while residents conducted a parallel cleanup in the coastal barangays.

Incepted in 2009, the program has mustered over 85,000 volunteers from the Metro Pacific firms, national government agencies, local government units, law enforcement agencies, civil society groups, dive industry stakeholders, and public elementary schools.

A multi-awarded CSR program both here and abroad, Shore It Up has been held in key coastal areas such as Mabini (Batangas), Alaminos City (Pangasinan), Del Carmen (Surigao del Norte), Medina (Misamis Oriental), Panglao (Bohol), Cordova (Cebu), and Subic Bay.



THE EXPONENTIAL OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

1
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

19 JUL 2019

DATE

1/2



SUBMERGED HIGHWAY – Rains and high tide set off flooding that covered a stretch of MacArthur Highway in Marilao, Bulacan, Thursday. (Jansen Romero)

LPA spotted; 'Falcon' prepares to leave

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The low-pressure area (LPA) being monitored off the West Philippine Sea may intensify into tropical depression "Goring" within 36 hours.

Around Thursday afternoon, the location of the LPA was estimated at 310 km west-northwest of Sinait, Ilocos Sur. ►11



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



19 JUL 2019

DATE

LPA spotted; 'Falcon'... ◀1

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) weather specialist Ezra Bulquerin said some parts of Northern Luzon will likely continue to experience rains in the next four days due to the LPA and tropical storm "Falcon" (international name "Danas") that enhanced the southwest onsoon or "habagat."

So far, the brewing cyclone, which will be named "Goring" once it becomes a tropical depression, is not seen to make landfall in any part of the country, Bulquerin said.

He added that the LPA will not have a direct effect on the movement of Falcon, which is about to leave the Philippine area of responsibility on Thursday evening.

Falcon was last spotted 655 km north-northeast of Basco, Batanes before Thursday evening.

It further strengthened with maximum sustained winds of 80 kilometers per hour (kph) and gustiness of up to 100 kph. It continues to move north at 25 kph.

Signal No. 1 has been lifted in all areas directly affected by Falcon.

This Friday, moderate to at times heavy rains will persist over Ilocos Region, Zambales, and Bataan, while light to moderate rains will be experienced in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon.

Residents in these areas, especially those in areas identified to be at risk of flooding and landslides, were advised to take precautionary measures, coordinate with local disaster risk reduction and management offices, and continue monitoring PAGASA updates. Sea travel also remains risky over the seaboard of Batanes, coastlines of Luzon, and the western seaboard of Visayas.

Weekend weather

Metro Manila, Southern Luzon, and the eastern section of Central Luzon may expect gradual improvement in weather condition by weekend but the western section of Central Luzon and Northern Luzon will likely continue to experience rains of varying intensities in the next four days, Bulquerin said.

Angat Dam water level still down

Meanwhile, the water level at Angat Dam in Bulacan continues to dwindle on Thursday, inching closer to its lowest recorded level of 157.56 meters.

As of Thursday morning, Angat Dam's water level was slightly down to 158.27 meters from 158.38 meters last Wednesday.

This is due to lack of rainfall over the Angat Watershed in Bulacan, despite the passage of Falcon in Northern Luzon.

Rice for calamity victims

With the first strong storm hitting some parts of the country, the National Food Authority (NFA) is now ready to fulfill its only job after the Rice Tariffication Law was passed in March.

Since the signing of Republic Act (RA) 11203, NFA's mandate was largely reduced to just ensuring rice buffer stock for the country during calamities and emergencies.

In a statement, the state-run grains agency assured that it has already prepositioned food security stocks in areas along the track of Falcon.

"We are closely monitoring and coordinating with LGUs [local government units]. If there will be areas that need rice for relief, our stocks are available," NFA Administrator Judy Carol L. Dansal said.

"Our OPCEN [operation center] will be working 24 hours a day during calamities like this to ensure that we have personnel to serve the LGUs and other relief agencies in case they will withdraw rice from our warehouses," she added.

Dansal said rice stocks of provinces projected to be hit by typhoons were bolstered this week.

NFA currently has around 4 million bags of rice strategically stored in its different warehouses in Luzon, including the National Capital Region (NCR), ready for distribution for relief operations during calamities like this one.

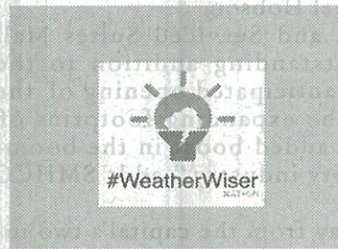
In total, the agency now holds more than 10 million bags of rice stored in all of its warehouses nationwide after being able to buy 5.4 million bags from local farmers in the first half of the year alone. (With a report from Madelaine B. Miraflor)

2/2



Amid rains, the latest El Niño update

IT has been a rainy week in several parts of the country due to another rain-producing system passing through the Philippine Area of Responsibility. Declared as a Tropical Storm, Falcon moved across the country, and Northern and Central Luzon were significantly affected by heavy to extreme rains, although no damaging winds were recorded.



El Niño update

Despite the rains and the announcement that we are now entering a Neutral Climate, the effects of the previously announced Weak El Niño still remains in effect. The official Climate Prediction Center/International Research Institute Probabilistic El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Forecast released last July 11 said the Philippines is now moving to a Neutral Climate. The Weak El Niño recorded a steady drop to 49% in July, and is expected to decrease further at 37% to 30% in the succeeding three-month period, transitioning to Neutral or Normal Climate. What this means is that despite the arrival of the rainy season a few weeks ago for provinces under Climate Type I, there will still be a significant reduction on rainfall distribution in other parts of the archipelago for a few months.

Based on studies, the Philippines is divided into four climatic types, depending on how rainfall is distributed throughout the year:

Type I—Two pronounced seasons: wet and dry, with maximum rain period from June to September and a dry season which lasts from 3 to 6 months;

Type II—No dry season, with a very pronounced maximum rain period that occurs in December and January;

Type III—Not very pronounced maximum rain period, with a short dry season lasting from 1 to 3 months;

Type IV—Rainfall more or less distributed throughout the year

Counting the cost of El Niño

As El Niño's impact increases on various sectors of the society, the reality is it could affect food security and water supply.

According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Situation Report No. 21 issued on 21 June 2019, there were about 247,610 farmers adversely impacted by the drought and dry spell conditions in Regions I, V, VI, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, Caraga, and the Cordillera Autonomous Region covering about 277,891 hectares of arable lands. The cost of dam-

age to agriculture was placed at nearly P8 million and total of 49 local government units (LGUs) have already declared states of calamity.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has since provided crop insurance assistance to about 87,231 farmers and fisherfolk affected by the drought, to the tune of P695 million through the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp, while the Department of Social Welfare and Development allotted P8.7 million, the LGUs turning over P966 million, and the Office of Civil Defense handing over nearly P300,000 worth of assistance to affected families.

With the recorded damage to date and the projected impact of El Niño in the coming months, the government is doing its best to assist communities through artificially-induced rain or cloud seeding operations.

Cloud seeding ops

The Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BWSM) in Regions II, III, IV-A, XI, XII and the National Capital Region have conducted about 156 sorties on March 24 to June 6 to artificially induce rainfall, of which seven sorties were accomplished by the Philippine Air Force. They will remain on standby for the possible conduct of cloud seeding operations in close coordination with the BWSM in Region II. The total cost of conducting cloud seeding operations stands at P18.3 million, according to the DA.

Water conservation

Meanwhile, just recently, the National Water Resource Board implemented the reduction of water allocation from Angat Dam for Municipal Water Supply and Irrigation in the province of Bulacan and parts of Pampanga. The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System has also started to reduce water pressure to its water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water from 16 pounds-force per square inch (psi) to 7 psi—adversely affecting millions of consumers in their service areas around Metro Manila and neighboring provinces. Water conservation measures have to be practiced virtually everyday by everyone. This crisis is not yet over, and it has the potential to complicate matters well into the first quarter of 2020 if not addressed properly.

What does this tell us? Aside from the constant reminder to conserve water, given the current weak El Niño conditions announced last month, WeatherPhilippines advises everyone to continue being #WeatherWiser. This means that we can all improve our practices by being more aware of day-to-day weather conditions and incorporating this knowledge in our decision-making processes.



Cloud seeding operations continue despite rains

By **RAMON EFREN LAZARO**

MALOLOS – Cloud seeding operations over Angat and La Mesa watersheds resumed yesterday as Tropical Storm Falcon left the Philippine area of responsibility, Mary Joy David, project development officer of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management of the Department of Agriculture, said.

Officials said the rains spawned by Falcon and the southwest monsoon were not enough to raise the water level in Angat Dam, the main source of potable water of Metro Manila residents.

The water level in Angat Dam slightly increased yesterday, but it is still not enough to surpass its critical

level of 160 meters.

Monitoring by the provincial disaster risk reduction and management office showed that the water level rose to 158.36 meters at about 8 a.m. yesterday and 158.68 meters at about 11 a.m.

The water level was recorded at 158.30 meters on Wednesday afternoon.

Authorities said cloud seeding operations would continue over Angat Dam to help increase water supply and prevent water interruption.

The National Water Resources Board is eyeing a minimum operating level of around 180 meters to bring water allocation to its normal amount of 46 cubic meters per second.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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THE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

10
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

19 JUL 2019

DATE

OPINION AND OPTION

One thing the gov't has not done, nature can only offer miniscule assistance



By **ELINANDO B. CINCO**

BY now many are well aware of what the administration has miserably failed to do, but Mother Nature is coming in as a Johnny-come-lately savior.

Because of inadequacies caused by rainless summer months, these crucial necessities came out in the open.

As people now see it, the government's present failures are: One, insufficient irrigation systems in known rice producing provinces; and two, no new sources of potable water specifically for Metro Manila.

Apparently, the long drought was one of the causes cited by resigned DA

Secretary Manny why the country has not achieved self-sufficiency in rice. The same reason given by administrations before him.

Previously resorted to by past administrations was cloud-seeding. The practice of inducing rain by spreading dry ice on thick clouds over rice granaries.

Done airborne by specially commissioned private small aircraft firms, the method is very expensive, costing the government thousands of pesos per minute.

This time of year, everybody looks up to the sky for the "agua libre" (free water) from Mother Nature, the start of the rainy season. It does not cost us a peso. But rains have become inconsistent and finicky.

If it will help, all we have to do is, figuratively, start beating our "war drums" (as resorted to by chosen rainmakers of American Indian tribes of the Old West), and, presto, volumes of rainwater would fall and come cascading in.

Only this time, the appropriate "war drums" are water receptacle containers to stock the precious liquid induring dry months.

As everyone knows, the habagat rains last only up to October. And November is the start of the rice-planting season. By March, the water dikes around rice fields will dry up, and the paddies will cake. Another five months of dry spell, a season of frustration.

It is a scenario that farmers and traders dread much, just thinking about it.

Of course, it would be a different situation if the government had built sufficient irrigation systems all over the rice-producing provinces of the land.

Next year, I have my doubts if people will still have the energy and strength to beat their "war drums" once more.

Meanwhile, as Latinos would say, "Vamos a cambiar la vista." Set our sights on Metro Manila and its thirsty and almost dehydrated 15 million customers of two water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water.

These paying customers are seething in anger. They say their problem will never be solved, even if water from heaven will give them a cool and refreshing solace this month, the start of typhoons and torrential rains.

They are in despair of solutions coming from the government. But why?

Because the water resource board of the government declares the ordinary rains that come around these months are miniscule. Not enough to

replenish the receding water reserve of dams that supply the needs of the metropolitan residents and nearby towns.

If rain water is to be expected to tide over the dams of their sinking water level (they call it "critical"), vanish your expectation. Officials said it would take the enormous water expelled from the skies by the likes of "Ondoy" in 2009 to even half-fill the reservoirs.

Another glaring and depressing fact: La Mesa Dam, Angat Dam, and other smaller reservoirs that fill in water needs of the present 15 million metropolitan residents, as well as adjoining towns, were made when there were only 8 million customers, according to published figures.

Since then, the government has not built any new water reservoir for the metropolis. And it will take, at least, four years to build one (compared to three years for an electricity energy generation company).

So, whoever is the president of the country in 2022, he will be pestered by the same water supply problems.



LPA off WPS may intensify

The low-pressure area being monitored off the West Philippine Sea may intensify into a tropical depression and named "Goring" within 48 hours.

The PA was estimated at 250 kilometers west-northwest of Sinit, Ilocos Sur at noon yesterday.

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration weather specialist Ezra Bulquerin said some parts of Northern Luzon will likely to continue experiencing rains in the next four days due to the LPA, the tropical cyclone-enhanced southwest monsoon or "habagat," and tropical storm "Falcon" (international name "Danas").

So far, the brewing tropical cyclone is not seen to make landfall over any part of the country, Bulquerin said.

He added that the LPA will not have a direct effect on the movement of Falcon, which was about to leave the Philippine Area of Responsibility last night.

Falcon was last spotted 385 kms north-northeast of Basco, Batanes at noon yesterday. It slightly strengthened with maximum sustained winds of 75 kilometers per hour and gustiness of up to 90 kph and continues to move north at 20 kph.

Signal No. 1 remains hoisted over Batanes while tropical cyclone wind signals in other areas have been lifted. Bulquerin said PAGASA will likely lift the warning in Batanes within yesterday.

Today, moderate to at times heavy rains will persist over Ilocos region, Zambales, Bataan, Cavite, Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, and northern Palawan, including Calamian and Cuyo Islands, while light to moderate to at times heavy rains will prevail over Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon.

Residents in these areas, especially those in areas identified to be at risk of flooding and landslides, were advised to take precautionary measures, coordinate with local disaster risk reduction and management offices, and continue monitoring PAGASA updates.

Sea travel also remains risky over the seaboard of Batanes, coastlines of Luzon, and the western seaboard of Visayas.

Meanwhile, the water level at Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan continues to dwindle and inched closer to its lowest recorded level of 157.56 meters.

As of yesterday morning, Angat Dam's water level was slightly down to 158.27 meters from 158.38 meters last Wednesday.

This is due to lack of rainfall over the Angat watershed in Bulacan, despite the passage of Falcon in Northern Luzon. (Elalyn V. Ruiz)



1/2

RENDERED HOMELESS Two children spend Thursday in the open after a landslide triggered by heavy rains generated by Tropical Storm "Falcon" damaged their house at Barangay Mataguisi in Pudtol, Apayao province, on Wednesday. Falcon blew out of the country on Thursday, but low pressure off Sinait in Ilocos Sur province could develop into a tropical depression this weekend. —PUDTOL MUNICIPAL OFFICE

By the Inquirer Staff
@Team_Inquirer

Tropical Storm "Falcon" (international name: Danas) gained strength as it blew out of the country on Thursday, leaving four people dead in two provinces in northern and central Luzon.

As of 4 p.m. on Thursday, Falcon was centered 655 kilometers north-northeast of Basco, Batanes province, out of the Philippine area of responsibility earlier than had been expected.

Falcon gained a bit of strength and speed as it moved northward at midday.

Bleak Friday

From 20 kilometers per hour earlier, it exited the country faster at 25 kph, carrying maximum winds of 80 kph from an earlier 75 kph, and gusts of up to 100 kph,

stronger than 90 kph earlier.

Falcon's departure, however, won't bring clear skies on Friday, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Pagasa said monsoon rains would persist in the Ilocos region, Cordillera Administrative Region and the provinces of Bataan and Zambales on Friday.

In Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon, cloudy skies and scattered rain showers would make the day bleak, according to the weather service.

Potential storm

Thunderstorms may bring isolated rain showers in the Visayas and Mindanao, it said.

But clear weather may be expected during the weekend, it added.

Pagasa, however, is moni-

toring low pressure that may develop into a tropical depression during the weekend.

As of 3 p.m. on Thursday, the low-pressure zone was 310 km west-northwest of Sinait, Ilocos Sur province, still outside the Philippine area of responsibility.

Once it becomes a tropical cyclone, it will be named "Goring."

Falcon touched down in Gattaran town, Cagayan, at 12:30 a.m. on Wednesday, drenching swaths of the far north, swelling waterways and flooding communities as far as Central Luzon and Metro Manila.

Judith Berbano, 43, a farmer, drowned after being swept away by strong current while gathering driftwood on a swollen river in Abulug town, said Rogelio Sending



PUDTOL MUNICIPAL OFFICE

DANGEROUS CROSSING Local officials assist villagers in San Mariano and San Jose in crossing a swollen creek at Pudtol, Apayao province, at the height of Tropical Storm 'Falcon' on Wednesday.

2/2

FROM A2

Jr., acting provincial information officer.

On Tuesday, as rains generated by Falcon hammered Cagayan, another farmer, Carlos Zedong, 45, of Gattaran, drowned while crossing the swollen Dummun River, Sendang said.

Drownings in Zambales

In Zambales province, two college students drowned while swimming off a beach in Iba town as Falcon befouled the weather on Tuesday.

The bodies of Marisol Yeke, 21, and Alison Testimio, 20, were recovered from waters off Barangay Lipay-Dingin in Iba, police said.

In Apayao province, people living near a river in Pudtol town were ordered to move to

safer grounds when part of the riverbank near their homes eroded under heavy rains on Tuesday.

Landslides triggered by incessant rains damaged houses in Upper Maton and Mataguisi villages, also in Pudtol.

In Pampanga province, 15 villages in the coastal town of Masantol went under water a meter deep, according to the provincial disaster office.

School was called off in the towns of Floridablanca, Guagua, Macabebe, Masantol and Sasmuan, and in Mabalacat City.

Damaged houses

Intermittent rains dumped by Falcon damaged houses and forced their occupants to shelters in Mindoro.

As of Thursday, 15 families, or 54 people, remained in an evacuation center at Bongabong town in Oriental

Mindoro province, the regional disaster office said.

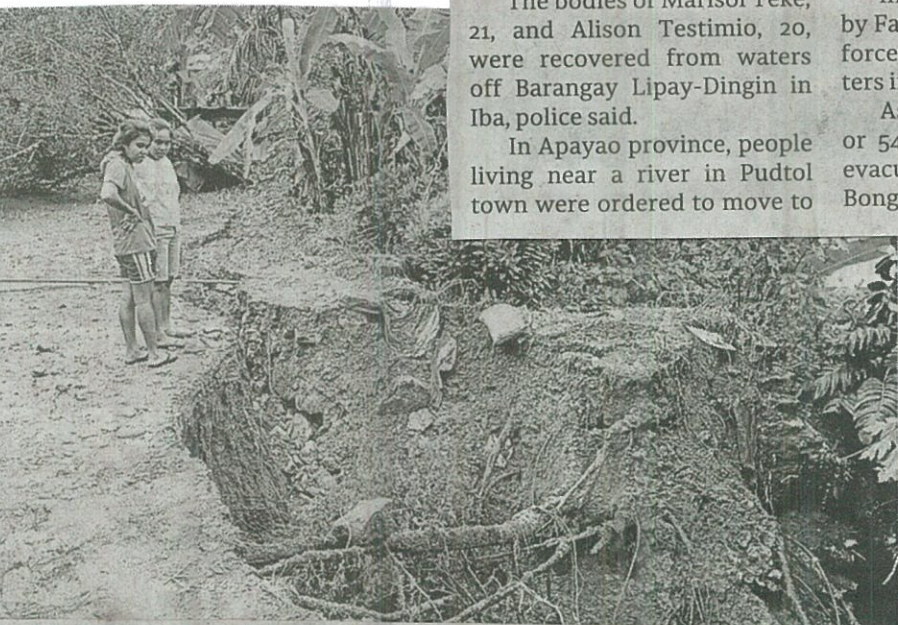
Floodwaters rose on Wednesday, damaging 15 houses made of light materials in Barangay Camantigue.

In Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro province, a meter-high storm surge damaged a house in Barangay Alibog.

Four families, or 20 people, were evacuated. They were allowed to return to their houses on Thursday.

Classes resumed at schools in Camarines Sur and Albay provinces in Bicol as the weather improved on Thursday.

Authorities were still assessing the damage caused by Falcon to infrastructure and agriculture in the region. —REPORTS FROM JHESSET O. ENANO, FRANCES MANGOSING, JOANNA ROSE ALIBOT, VILLAMOR VISAYA JR., LEILANIE ADRIANO AND MARICAR CINCO INQ



ERODED BY HEAVY RAIN Residents view a portion of the riverbank at Pudtol, Apayao province, that eroded under heavy rain generated by Tropical Storm "Falcon." People living on



19 JUL 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Bohol eyes carrying capacity for tourist spots

By Daniel Yap

TAGBILARAN CITY – A Bohol representative is eyeing a bill to determine the respective carrying capacities of major tourism attractions in the country – apparently to prevent abuse like what happened to Boracay Island.

Rep. Kristine Alexie Tutor (3rd District) said she plans to file the bill as soon as the 18th Congress opens on Monday.

Tutor said each tourist spot should have a carrying capacity distinct to the others and the government must not adopt a one-size-fits-all policy.

She said that the standards may be jointly developed and studied by the Departments of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources and Interior and Local Government.

“They can do the groundwork if they want to,” Tutor said.

The data obtained from the study will help determine the steps in achieving

sustainable tourism as it is integrated with other major concerns such as tourist arrival data, waste management, water quality and land use plan.

Meanwhile, Gov. Arthur Yap and Rep. Edgar Chatto (1st District) expressed support to Tutor’s move.

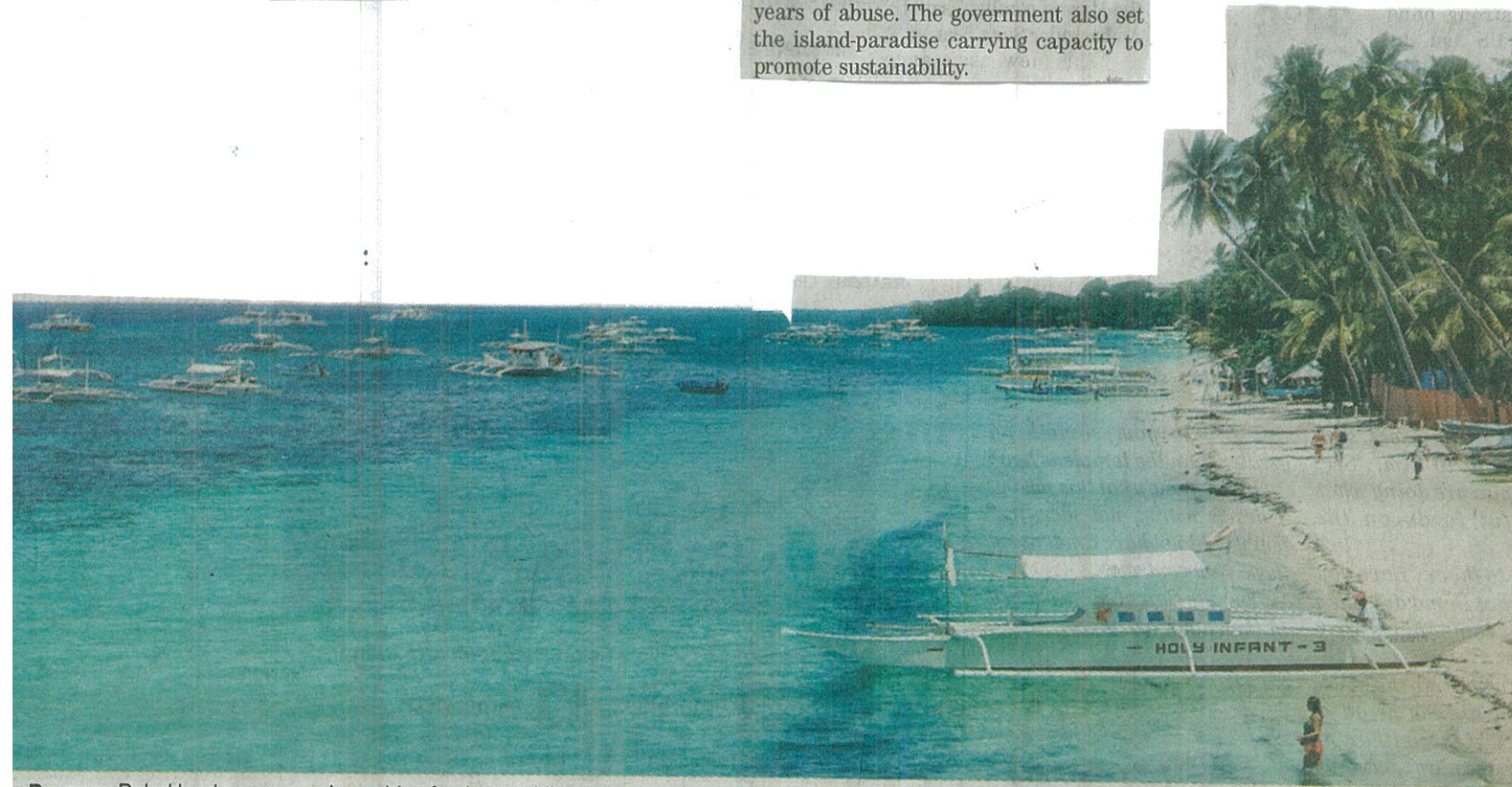
Yap reiterated his administration’s focus on tourism and a carrying capacity study is a critical part in preserving the tourism sites in Bohol.

For his part, Chatto said the carrying capacity study is important in identifying the challenges and propose solutions to the problems of tourist areas like Panglao Island.

Chatto said he is optimistic that the agencies can

complete the study as soon as possible with the help of local government units in Bohol.

Last year, President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the closure of Boracay Island to pave the way for its rehabilitation after years of abuse. The government also set the island-paradise carrying capacity to promote sustainability.



r Boracay Bohol leaders are one in pushing for the establishment of a standard carrying capacity for each of the province’s tourist spots like Panglao Island.



TITLE :

PAGE 1/

DATE

DoT welcomes *Travel + Leisure* ranking of Palawan, Cebu, Boracay

THE Department of Tourism (DoT) celebrates the inclusion of the three popular island tourist destinations of Palawan, Cebu, and Boracay in *Travel + Leisure's* World's Best Awards 2019

Leading the Philippine honorees is the "the perennially popular Philippine island of Palawan," wrote the magazine. Palawan, which ranked second on the 15 Best Islands in the World list, is home to the enchanting Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, Coron and El Nido.

Palawan is also where the DoT's San Vicente Flagship Tourism Enterprise Zone (TEZ) is located. Master planned as an integrated tourism destination project, it is envisioned as a sustainable investor's haven that will be a catalyst for inclusive economic growth through public and private partnership.

"We are thrilled that Palawan has improved its ranking this year and is inching closer to regaining its top spot in T+L's World's Best Awards. Hats off as well to Cebu and Boracay for being recognized among the best in Asia," DoT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said.

Cebu and Boracay were voted seventh and ninth, respectively, in



the Top 10 Islands in Asia category by the readers of the international travel magazine. The islands were rated according to their activities and sights, natural attractions and beaches, food, friendliness, and overall value. Palawan also came in second on this list.

"This citation by a major publication validates our efforts towards attaining

a sustainable tourism industry and now, more than ever, encourages the DoT to work even harder on this advocacy, creating a tourism environment that is recognized and lauded not only today, but for the generations to come," remarked Mr. Puyat.

T+L writer Rebecca Ascher-Walsh quoted one reader naming Palawan as

the "single most beautiful place I have ever seen."

Ascher-Walsh also wrote that the Philippine island triumvirate of Palawan, Cebu, and Boracay are longtime favorites thanks to top-notch reef and wreck diving, white-sand beaches, hiking trails with waterfalls, and welcoming locals.



TOURISM

MEGAWORLD TO OPEN NEW HOTEL IN BORACAY

Real estate tycoon Andrew Tan is raising his stake in the hospitality space of newly mended Boracay Island with the opening next month of the 442-room Belmont Hotel inside its Boracay Newcoast estate.

The P2.1-billion hotel of Global-Estate Resorts Inc. (Geri), the leisure estate arm of Megaworld Corp., is the group's second hotel development inside the 150-hectare Boracay Newcoast. The hotel, which has three towers, is located on the sloping area of the estate beside Savoy Hotel Boracay, overlooking the eastern beach of Boracay Island.

"Our second hotel under the Belmont brand will offer an exclu-

sive nature experience in the paradise island of Boracay, as it allows guests to see the island's panoramic natural scenery from one building to another—from the vast sea to the lush mountains and hills of the island and other nearby islands," said Raymundo Melendrez, managing director at Luxury Global Hotels and Leisure Inc., the company operating Belmont Hotels under the Megaworld Hotels Group.

Belmont Hotel is the second homegrown hotel brand introduced under Megaworld Hotels. The first Belmont Hotel opened in Newport City in 2015. Another Belmont Hotel is set to open in Iloilo Business Park by 2023.

FROM B3

The new hotel will offer rooms priced P5,000 to 8,000 per night. The property has deluxe twin or queen, premiere deluxe and executive suites, with sizes ranging from 27 square meters to 52 sqm. It also offers special rooms for persons with disability.

Belmont Hotel Boracay offers all-day dining at Belmont Café, featuring cuisine with Asian and Mediterranean influences. Located on the ground level, the restaurant has vowed to utilize local fresh farm produce to support the farmers in Aklan and other nearby provinces.

"Our continuing thrust to help boost tourism in the country is even gaining more momentum as

we open more hotels across our tourism townships. Geri, as the developer of Boracay Newcoast, remains committed to help build our country through tourism developments," Geri president Monica Salomon added.

Megaworld Hotels has five homegrown brands so far: Richmond Hotels, Belmont Hotels, Savoy Hotels, Twin Lakes Hotel and Hotel Lucky Chinatown with close to 3,000 hotel rooms. In the next five years, the company will also open new homegrown brands in Parañaque, Bacolod, Iloilo, Boracay and Laguna.

During the first quarter, Megaworld's hotel business grew by 56 percent year-on-year to P574 million, becoming the group's fastest-growing segment.

—DORIS DURLAO-ABADILLA INQ



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



19 JUL 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Megaworld to open 2nd Boracay hotel

By IRIS GONZALES

Andrew Tan-led Megaworld will put up the P2.1-billion Belmont Hotel Boracay, its second hotel in the island resort, through unit Global Estate Resorts Inc. (GERI).

The hotel will have three towers and will be located within the sloping area of the 150-hectare Boracay Newcoast, just beside Savoy Hotel Boracay.

It features 442 rooms with sizes ranging from 27 square meters to 52 square meters.

Luxury Global Hotels and Leisure Inc. managing director Raymundo Melendrez said the company's second hotel in Boracay would allow guests to see the island's panoramic natural scenery from one building to another.

Monica Salomon, president of GERI, said the second hotel is part of the company's efforts to help boost tourism in the country.

"GERI, as the developer of Boracay Newcoast, remains committed to help build our country through tourism developments," she said.

Belmont Hotel Boracay offers dining options that include

all-day dining at Belmont Café, featuring cuisines with Asian and Mediterranean influences. Located within the ground level, the restaurant will utilize local fresh farm produce to support the farmers in Aklan and other nearby provinces.

Two more food and beverage outlets will also open in the hotel. These are the Zabana Pool Bar at the second level deck, and the Trellis Garden within the landscaped deck that connects the two towers.

Belmont Hotel Boracay likewise features many amenities and services that include a swimming pool and in-pool lounge, aqua spa, courtyard, landscaped gardens, fitness center with shower and changing rooms, business center, function halls, meeting rooms, a full-time concierge, 24-hour in-room dining service and complimentary shuttle services.

Belmont Hotel is the second homegrown hotel brand introduced under Megaworld Hotels following the first Belmont Hotel that the company put up in Newport City in 2015.

Another Belmont Hotel is set to open in Iloilo Business Park by 2023.



TITLE:

Megaworld to open new Belmont Hotel in Boracay

PROPERTY developer Megaworld Corp. is set to open the 442-room Belmont Hotel in Boracay Island, the country's premier tourist destination.

Megaworld said in a disclosure to the stock exchange the P2.1-billion Belmont Hotel Boracay is a three-tower hotel located within the 150-hectare Boracay Newcoast township.

The hotel features choices of deluxe twin or queen, premiere deluxe and executive suites, with sizes ranging from 27 square meters to 52 sqm.

"Our second hotel under the Belmont brand will offer an exclusive nature experience in the paradise island of Boracay, as it allows guests to see the island's panoramic natural scenery from one building to another—from the vast sea to the lush mountains and hills of the island and other nearby islands," said Raymundo Melendrez, managing director of Luxury Global Hotels and Leisure Inc., the company operating Belmont Hotels under the Megaworld Hotels Group.

Belmont Hotel Boracay offers all-day dining at Belmont Café, featuring cuisines with Asian and Mediterranean influences. Located within the ground level, the restaurant will utilize local fresh farm produce to support the farmers in Aklan and other nearby provinces.

The hotel also features a wide array of amenities and services that include a swimming pool and in-pool lounge, Aqua Spa, courtyard, landscaped gardens, fitness center with shower and changing rooms, business center, function halls, meeting rooms, a full-time concierge, 24-hour in-room dining service and complimentary shuttle services.

Belmont Hotel is the second homegrown hotel brand introduced under Megaworld Hotels. The first Belmont Hotel opened in Newport City in 2015. Another Belmont Hotel is set to open in Iloilo Business Park by 2023.

Megaworld Hotels has already opened five homegrown brands: Richmond Hotels, Belmont Hotels, Savoy Hotels, Twin Lakes Hotel and Hotel Lucky Chinatown with close to 3,000 hotel rooms.

The company will open new homegrown hotel brands in Parañaque, Bacolod, Iloilo, Boracay and Laguna over the next five years. **Jennifer B. Austria**



Belmont Boracay to open Aug.

MEGAWORLD Corp. said it is set to open in August its second hotel in Boracay, the P2.1 billion Belmont Hotel Boracay.

The three-tower hotel is located within the sloping area of the company's Boracay Newcoast just beside Savoy Hotel Boracay and overlooking the eastern beach of the island.

Belmont Hotel Boracay features 442 rooms with choices of Deluxe Twin or Queen, Premiere Deluxe, and Executive Suites, with sizes ranging from 27 square meters (sq.m.) to 52 sq.m. It also offers special rooms for Persons with Disability (PWDs).

"Our second hotel under the Belmont brand will offer an exclusive nature experience in the paradise island of Boracay, as it allows guests to see the island's panoramic natural scenery from one building to another – from the vast sea to the lush mountains and hills of the island and other nearby

islands," said Raymundo Melendres, Luxury Global Hotels and Leisure Inc., managing director.

Luxury Global Hotels is the company operating Belmont Hotels under the Megaworld Hotels Group.

"Our continuing thrust to help boost tourism in the country is even gaining more momentum as we open more hotels across our tourism townships. GERI (Global Estate Resorts Inc.) as the developer of Boracay Newcoast, remains committed to help build our country through tourism developments," added Monica Salomon, Global Estate Resorts Inc., president.

Belmont Hotel is the second homegrown hotel brand introduced under Megaworld Hotels. The first Belmont Hotel opened in Newport City in 2015. Another Belmont Hotel is set to open in Iloilo Business Park by 2023.



Operations of Belmont Hotel Boracay to begin next month

MEGAWORLD Corp. is opening its P2.1-billion Belmont Hotel in the newly renovated Boracay Island next month, as it continues to expand its footprint in the hospitality sector.

In a statement Thursday, the listed property developer said the hotel project undertaken by its subsidiary Global-Estate Resorts, Inc. (GERI) will feature three towers housing 442 rooms.

The hotel is located inside Boracay Newcoast, GERI's 150-hectare integrated leisure and tourism estate in the northern part of the island.

Amenities include a swimming pool with in-pool lounge, Aqua Spa, courtyard, landscaped gardens, fitness center with shower and changing rooms, business center, function halls, meeting rooms, a 24-hour in-room dining service, and complimentary shuttle services.

It will also house two food and beverage outlets, namely the Zabana Pool Bar located at the second level deck, and the Trellis Garden on the landscaped deck which connects two of the hotel's towers.

"Our second hotel under the Belmont brand will offer an exclusive nature experience in the paradise island of Boracay, as it allows guests to see the island's panoramic natural scenery from one building to another," Luxury Global Hotels and Leisure, Inc. Managing

Director Raymundo Melendres said in a statement.

Luxury Global operates Belmont Hotels under the Megaworld Hotels Group.

Megaworld first opened a Belmont Hotel in its Newport City township in Pasay City in 2015. Following Boracay Newcoast, the company will also open a Belmont Hotel in Iloilo Business Park in Mandurriao, Iloilo in 2023.

"Our continuing thrust to help boost tourism in the country is even gaining more momentum as we open more hotels across our tourism townships," GERI President Monica T. Salomon said in a statement.

The company also has four other homegrown brands aside from Belmont Hotel, namely Richmonde Hotels, Savoy Hotels, Twin Lakes Hotel, and Hotel Lucky Chinatown, bringing its total room count close to 3,000.

It will also unveil new homegrown brands in Parañaque, Bacolod, Iloilo, Boracay, and Laguna in the next five years.

Megaworld's hotel business grew 56% to P574 million in the first quarter of 2019. Overall, the company's attributable profit was up 16% to P3.8 billion, driven by a 15% increase in consolidated revenues to P14.9 billion.

Shares in Megaworld were unchanged at P6.25 each at the stock exchange on Thursday. — **Arra B. Francia**



19 JUL 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Megaworld unit opens Belmont Hotel Boracay

PROPERTY developer Megaworld Corp. on Thursday said its unit Global-Estate Resorts Inc. has opened its second hotel development inside the 150-hectare Boracay Newcoast.

The P2.1-billion Belmont Hotel Boracay is a three-tower hotel located within the sloping area of the estate just beside Savoy Hotel Boracay, and overlooking the eastern beach of Boracay Island.

The hotel features 442 rooms with choices of deluxe twin or queen, premier deluxe and executive suites, with sizes ranging from 27 square meters to 52 square meters.

"Our second hotel under the Belmont brand will offer an exclusive nature experience in the paradise island of Boracay, as it allows guests to see the island's panoramic natural scenery from one building to another—from the vast sea to the lush mountains and hills of the island and other nearby islands," said Raymundo Melendrez, managing director, Luxury Global Hotels and Leisure Inc., the company operating Belmont Hotels under the Megaworld Hotels Group.

"Our continuing thrust to help boost tourism in the country is even gaining more momentum as we open more hotels across our tourism townships. Geri, as the developer of Boracay Newcoast, remains committed to help build our country through tourism developments," Geri President Monica Salomon said.

Belmont Hotel is the second homegrown hotel brand introduced under Megaworld Hotels. The first was opened in Newport City in 2015. Another one is set to open in Iloilo Business Park by 2023.

To date, Megaworld Hotels has already opened five homegrown brands including Richmond, Belmont, Savoy, Twin Lakes and Hotel Lucky Chinatown with close to 3,000 hotel rooms. In the next five years, the company will also open new homegrown hotel brands in Parañaque, Bacolod, Iloilo, Boracay and Laguna.

During the first quarter of 2019, Megaworld's hotel business became the fastest-growing segment of the quarter to P574 million, a 56-percent increase from last year's P368 million. **VG Cabuag**



Manny shoots the messenger. Again.

Improving bottom line

The country's second-biggest nickel producer Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. (FNI) is expecting a healthier bottom line despite a reduction in its projected ore output this year.

FNI president and CEO **Dante Bravo** said in a briefing that even when the company cut its target output to 5.5 million wet metric

tons (WMT) this year from 6 million WMT last year, operations were expected to yield medium-to-high-grade nickel ores that command better prices.

"We've been shipping higher grade ores to compensate for the lower volume," Bravo said, adding that ore reserves in one of its mine sites in Cagdianao known as Caga 2 was beginning to contract.

"Moving forward, we've already extracted the overburden so we're already mining the medium-to-high-grade ores," he added.

FNI has opened a new mine area called Caga 3 in the same site. This is seen to augment operations and deliver some 1 million WMT of ore for 2019, or 18 percent of its production target.

The volume is expected to go up once the company finishes its two-year development of the area.

Overall, Bravo said the growing global demand for nickel was seen to propel the local nickel industry despite ongoing suspensions imposed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The ongoing revolution of the electric vehicle industry and the infrastructure boom will continue to push demand for nickel up.

Last year, FNI saw its net profit decrease by 35 percent to P509.5 million from P779.7 million a year ago due to "challenging marketing conditions" and higher taxes imposed by the government.

To maintain profitability, the company has been focusing on selling higher grade ores.

—KARL R. OCAMPO



19 JUL 2019

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

FILIPINO WORLVIEW

- ROBERTO R. ROMULO -

Plastics: Major source of pollution

About 22 years ago, I hosted a conference for then president which had top CEOs from around the world. One of the most outstanding presentations was given by a Filipino multinational executive on what was then a revolutionary way of retail marketing in low income countries: the introduction of a single use, throw away plastic retail packs. The Filipino was recognized and rewarded by his company and held in high regard globally by those in consumer marketing. Personally, I thought it was brilliant.

Ironically, this sachet has become the bane of the 21st century. In June 2018, data gathered by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) and Mother Earth Foundation in the past 12 months showed that single-use plastic packaging from six multinational companies (MNCs) comprise almost three-fourths of all collected residual waste, or waste that can neither be composted nor recycled.

The audit also indicated that top corporations producing plastic residual waste earned a total of \$22 billion, while cities surveyed spent \$73 million in waste management.

"On land and in oceans, these companies are choking the environment with their problematic packaging. It's time we hold these companies accountable. They cannot continue raking in money and then passing on the responsibility and costs of cleaning their mess to cities and Filipino taxpayers," said Froilan Grate, regional coordinator of GAIA Asia Pacific and president of Mother Earth Foundation.

In fairness to MNCs, they have announced plans to resolve this problem by developing alternative methods of delivering products to consumers, including biodegradable packaging.

Some critics, however, say MNCs are too slow considering that this issue has already been identified for years.



CTALK CITO BELTRAN

State of crucial resources?

When the President gives his SONA or State of the Nation Address on Monday, July 22, will he make mention of the scarce state of vital resources that have become major headaches for the country? To this date the water supply for the entire Metro Manila is at critical level and it is one elephant in the room that Malacañang seems to be blind to, or could be intentionally ignoring. It's possible that they find no point in talking about a problem that only God and "mother nature" can solve, but it remains as a critical concern nonetheless. Then there is the problem of power supply and the serious lack of power generation plants that on the other hand can be solved through human intervention if the government or the President gave it more attention.



As far as the water crisis is concerned, I have long said that the only way Filipinos will learn to conserve water is if they run out of it, or when the government finally stops using water prices as a tool for political popularity. Every administration has avoided or deferred on the issue of raising the price of water because they deem it too politically sensitive. Even now, with Angat and La Mesa dams running dry, the government is quick to pass the buck and the blame to the concessionaires for not having invested enough. Yet, nothing has been said about the wasteful habits of Filipinos when it comes to water. The government has barely stated the fact that people should stop wasting water. The argument that Filipinos can't afford a price hike simply does not hold. Even in the so-called depressed areas people buy higher priced bottled water or filtered water by the liter. Perhaps, when the dams finally stop meeting the needs, maybe then we will all learn the lesson that water is a limited resource that is more valuable than gasoline, diesel or electricity that should not be wasted on politics.

Speaking of electricity, I find it ridiculous that the government that constantly reminds us that there is a power crisis and provide us with colorful panic alerts, is also the government that prevents the full and unhampered development of solar power facilities in a tropical country such as ours. While so many countries and governments have essentially removed tariffs and are actually giving grants or incentives for people to incorporate solar power into their daily supply, the Philippine government on the other hand maintains various forms and levels of tariffs or taxes on imported solar power equipment, parts or systems. Call me crazy but the government should simply have an open door policy regarding the importation and construction of solar power systems whether for industrial, commercial, public or private applications. We cannot and should not be hostage to the whims or caprice of Middle East nations or every political conflict in their region that causes fuel prices to rocket sky high.

There is no logic to operating power plants based on highly polluting fuels and above all why prevent Filipinos from using "free" electricity so they can spend the money saved on equally important things or invest the cash on business. Solar power has already been tried and tested in the Philippines for public lighting, powering equipment in remote locations, used for irrigation and aeration of rice paddies and fishponds. In the western world they actually have laws that require builders and homeowners to incorporate solar power systems in homes and residential design and construction. If our electricity or power resource is limited, if the economy is outgrowing the supply, then it makes sense for alternative resources to be developed and encouraged by the government and not to profit from it through taxes and tariffs.

Aside from our limited resources of water and electricity, there is another "resource" that to date has been labeled as a luxury instead of a vital need and that would be internet connectivity. If everybody took time to study the far-reaching effects of poor internet connectivity, we would all wake up to the realization that the state or quality of internet service in the Philippines is one reason why Philippine businesses, education and government services is so undeveloped and is a major obstacle to our economic and political boom. All types of businesses, industries and government sector need internet connectivity in order to be efficient, far-reaching and profitable. Anyone who wants to go beyond their current geographical boundary or limitation can break through via the internet. In today's reality, Filipinos are finding ways and means to adapt, given the substandard and unreliable internet systems available and in spite of that they are coping and somehow able to do business. Imagine what Philippine business would be like if we could just ramp up or vastly improve this necessary resource.

The deplorable state of connectivity in the Philippines is also to blame if Filipino students lag behind in knowledge and abilities. Instead of all schools being internet based, the education system is still largely paper based, with children walking kilometers carrying backpacks heavy enough to be used for cross-fit training. Sadly, the Duterte Administration has gone through three Cabinet secretaries at the Department of Information Communication and Technology (DICT) but very little headway has been gained in terms of improved internet quality, speed or connectivity. At the moment, people are projecting the incoming third telco as the redeemer of the industry by attaching to it unreasonable expectations. Once again the government passes the buck and will surely also pass the blame if the third player fails to provide the much needed resource.

What is the problem? Do we also have a lack of intelligence or is it merely a lack of political will to address the problem?

* * *

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Coast Guard to set protocol for Tañon

CEBU CITY: To keep Tañon Strait as a protected seascape, the Philippine Coast Guard in Central Visayas (PCG-7) is drafting the common protocol for the 161-kilometer strip that separates the islands of Cebu and Negros.

"We'll be starting the drafting of the common protocol in the coast guard. We call it the use of the rules of the use of force to govern our actions in the area (Tañon Strait)," PCG-7 commander Ronnie Gil Gavan said in a press briefing on Wednesday.

Gavan said the common protocol for all enforcers was to prevent missteps, miscalculations or acts that would be detrimental to the stakeholders in Tañon Strait.

"Tañon Strait is a narrow band of water. So only 12 LGUs (local government units), in theory, have more than 10 kilometers or 10.1 to 15 kilometers. And in our experience, all apprehensions that we have made along those areas are actually involving vessels engaged in illegal fishing methods particularly hulbot-hulbot (fishing with the use of destructive net) and sometimes dynamite fishing which are illegal anywhere along the municipal waters," said Gavan.

Gavan said the drafting of the protocol would be a long process because even the scientific aspects in the enforcement activities along Tañon Strait would be considered.

"It is a highly technical activity that we have to pursue. So legal is just one, science is another one. So we will try to

consider all aspects in the management of Tañon Strait in crafting the common protocol to be observed by the law enforcers in the area," he said.

Gavan said several names were suggested for the protocol, including Cebu Uniformed Rules for Enforcers or CURE, Conservation Area Rules for Enforcers or CARE, and Protected Rules for Teamwork between National Area Rules for Enforcers and Rural Stakeholders or Regulated Stakeholders or Partners.

Although PCG-7 would still agree to a name, Gavan pointed out that the essence of the protocol was to change the situation where law enforcers are detached from the people.

"We'd like to make the people part of the law enforcement activities of the Tañon Strait as represented by their local governments," he said.

Gavan clarified the "moratorium" he said in a dialogue with the Cebu Provincial Government on Tuesday was in the context of ending the previous practice where the LGUs are not deeply involved in the enforcement activities at Tañon Strait.

Republic Act 11038, the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018 established the Tañon Strait Protected Seascape as a protected area.

Gavan said only those vessels or fishing activities under the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 are allowed in Tañon Strait.

RHEA RUTH ROSELL



The environment and fishery resources of the Spratly Archipelago

BY A.C. ALCALA, PH.D.

National Scientist of the Philippines

THE Philippines and Vietnam explored the Spratly Archipelago and the Scarborough Shoal by the Philippines-Vietnam Joint Oceanographic and Marine Research Expedition in the South China Sea (JOMSRE-SCS) in 1996-2007. The Spratlys are part of the EEZ of the Philippines. Four expeditions visited these islands during the four years. The Philippine research team for the first two expeditions was composed of scientists from the University of the Philippines (Diliman) and the research team for the last two trips was composed of scientists from Silliman University and other universities. I served as chief scientist for the third and fourth expeditions and helped Ambassador Alberto Encomienda of DFA implement JOMSRE-SCS 3 and 4. The research program was terminated after the holding of the Conference on the results of the expedition in Ha Long City, Vietnam in 2008. The Proceedings of the Conference was published in March, 2008.

The marine environment of the Spratly island group is unique and is characterized by low islands, shoals, and atolls. The coral reef

ecosystem dominates the environment. There are no mangroves. Seagrass meadows and algal beds are sparse. Much of the productivity in the Spratlys is due to phytoplankton.

Monsoons play important roles in surface water circulation which distribute marine propagules, such as larvae of fish and other marine species. Two gyres circulating counter-clockwise, Luzon Gyre off western Luzon and Nansha Gyre off western Palawan, distribute fish larvae to western Luzon and Palawan during the winter months. These gyres also circulate nutrients from deeper sea bottoms at these times when the deep sea water is less (or not) stratified.

Sampling of fish larvae showed that shallow stations yielded mostly demersal coral reef species while deep stations were mostly pelagic species of the families Scombridae and Myctophidae. These two families are likely to reach Philippine waters via ocean currents like the two gyres already mentioned.

It is not surprising that Palawan marine waters are productive of fish, as shown earlier by large catches of muro-ami fishermen in the past. Muro-ami has been

banned since the early 1990s because of the damage it inflicts on coral reefs, which are the habitats of coral reef-associated fish, and its high efficiency in sweeping coral reefs clean of fish. Pollution and destructive fishing methods are some factors that destroy coral reef and kill adults, juveniles and larvae of fish.

The South China Sea is a unique marine environment in that it is the area nearest to the Philippines where many atolls exist, two of which were explored by our research teams (North Danger Reef and Jackson Atoll). In the remote past, atolls were formed from volcanoes, but I do not need to explain their origin at this time. Atolls are generally roundish, oval, or polygonal in shape with emergent islands or shallow reefs that may be exposed at low tides and serve to mark the atoll outlines that enclose deeper lagoons. Sea water moves in and out of lagoons through deeper gaps in the ring-like structure of the system. Lagoons may retain nutrients that are released outside the atolls through water movement. Our research team found higher concentrations of nutrients in the upper 20 meters of water. Also, in lagoons were large numbers of juvenile and adult fishes,

thus functioning as centers from which fish and other useful species are held before they disperse to other areas of the ocean via ocean currents, such as the Luzon and Nansha gyres.

But lagoons of atolls could also accumulate undesirable and even dangerous pollutants, such as heavy metal by-products of industries and sediments and silt.

Our survey found that the average biomass of target fish in 2005 and 2007 was low, 42.1 metric tons per square kilometer, down from 114 metric tons per square kilometer in 1997, indicating heavy exploitation. Only four of the eight giant clam species, which are important in providing structure to coral reef systems, were found during our surveys. The giant among clam (*Tridacna gigas*) was gone, and so were some important invertebrates, such as sea cucumbers.

One of the recommendations for conserving the environment and biodiversity resources in the Spratlys is to create peace parks (a type of MPA) by the Philippines and some other countries. Peace parks function well in at least four areas of the world claimed by two or more nations.



July 19, 2019
DATE

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

LABIS na nakasusuka ang pag-rape at pagpatay sa 1-taong sanggol na lalaki ng lalaking umaming lasing nang isagawa ang krimen.

Nang madala sa ospital, nakitang nabutas nang husto ang puwet ng batang si John Angelo Salenga, inuntog at may sugat sa ulo, may palatandaang sinakal at natagpuang patay sa ika-7 palapag ng abandongong gusali sa Makati City.

Umamin ang suspek sa krimen na si Gerald Reparip, 27, isang obrero na nagsabing lasing siya nang gawin nito ang krimen.

NAKADROGA

Si Reparip ang hinanap na suspek sa krimen dahil may nakakita sa kanya na bitbit ang bata sa 'di malamang lugar.

Ito'y makaraang makipag-inuman sa isang katrabaho ng lolo ng biktima.

Dinakip si Reparip ng mga pulis makaraang matagpuan ang biktima pasado alas-12 ng gabi.

Bagama't pagkalahing ang sinabi nitong dahilan kung bakit nagawa nito ang krimen, dapat na isailalim ito sa drug test.

Sapagkat hindi talaga makatao ang ginawa ni Reparip sa biktima.

Karaniwang makahayop ang gawa ng mga nakadroga gaya ng naganap kay Salenga.

PARUSANG KAMATAYAN

Kung maisalang sa drug test si Reparip at maging positibo ito, hindi dapat na hanggang kay Reparip lamang ang kaso.

Dapat habulin din ang mga pinagkukunan nito ng droga at panagutin sa karampatang batas.

Kasama sa mga habulin din ang mga posibleng kasama nitong kahit user dahil kung sakaling user lamang ito, nakitaan ang isang user ng krimeng makahayop ang gawa.

Dapat na mapanagot ang mga pinagkukunan nila ng droga at gayon din ang mga user.

Sakali ngang maging positibo sa droga si Reparip, patunay lang ito na kapantay ng mga user ang mga tulak, druglord, narco-politician, narco-cop at dapat na mailapat



Ni **BENNY ANTIPODA**

PARUSANG BITAY MULING BUHAYIN

sa kanya ang pinakamatingid parusa ng batas.

Kahit hindi umiiral ang parusang kamatayan sa bansa, umiiral naman ang sangkatauhang paniniwala na ang buhay na inutang ay buhay rin ang kabayaran.

Lalo't isang karumaldumal ang pag-rape at pagpatay sa isang sanggol na wala talagang kalaban-laban.

BITAY BUHAYIN

Muli, sang-ayon ang ULTIMATUM sa pagbuhay ng parusang kamatayan batay sa kaso ni Salenga.

Kung iisipin, hindi lang si Salenga ang biktima ng katulad ng karimari-marim na krimen, droga man o hindi ang dahilan.

Pero sa mga sunod-sunod na pag-rape at pagpatay sa ilang paslit simula noong Enero 2019 katulad nina Ashley Nicole Silva, 5 taon, ng Calumpit, Bulacan at hindi pinangalanang 5-taon ding babae sa Valencia, Bukidnon.

Umaming bangag sa solvent si Marvin Mengolia na nang-rape at pumatay kay Silva samantalang hinahanap pa ng pulisya ang tumakas na suspek sa pagpatay at pag-rape sa biktima sa Valencia.

HINDI RASON

Kung tutuusin, parehong mahihirap na tao ang mga suspek.

Klarong hindi nauugnay sa kahirapan ang mga krimen na nagawa ng mga ito.

Parehong umamin sina Reparip at Mengolia sa krimen.

At tiyak na hindi rin mayaman ang kriminal sa kaso sa Bukidnon.

Hindi uubra ang rason na hindi patawan ng parusang bitay ang mga mahihirap na karaniwang rason ng mga taga-human rights para kontrahin ang pagpapairal ng parusang bitay.

Ang mga mahihirap kasi umano ay walang kakayahang makakuha ng magagaling na abogado para sila ipagtaggol sa hukuman.

Pero may mga klarong kaso gaya ng pag-amin sa

krimen na hindi kayang ipagtaggol ng kahit pinakamagaling na abogado sa buong mundo.

Diwa ng katarungan o pagbabayad ng krimeng nagawa ang dapat ipataw at sakaling may parusang bitay sa anomang anyo, bitay ang ilalapat.

Basta idaan sa patas at makatarungang paranang paglilitis, walang dahilan upang hindi ilapat ang parusang bitay sa isang kriminal, mayaman man o mahirap.

PATAY SA BAGYO

Efren Sena Sr., 53; Mateya Serna, 53; at Efren Serna Jr.

Sila ang kinilala ni Jose Abas Santos, Davao Occidental Mayor Jayson Joyce na namatay sa landslide sa nasabing lugar sanhi ng mga ulan na ibinuhos sa lugar ng bagyong si Falcon.

Pinaniniwalaang nalunod naman ang isang Carlos Pedong at hindi pa natatagpuan habang tinitipa ito.

Lamang, magkakaiiba ang salaysay ng mga kasama nitong tumatawid sa ilog sa pagsasabing hanggang tuhod lang ang lalim ng ilog samantalang sinasabi naman ng iba na hanggang balikang tubig-baha.

Anoman ang katotohanan sa huling kaso, nalunog man o nawawala lang ito, ang mahalagang usapin ay ang kaugnayan ng mga pangyayaring ito sa bagyong Falcon.

Ang pag-iingat sa landslide at sa baha ang pinagdidinaan ng mga awtoridad na dapat pagingat ng lahat.

Magandang makinig ang lahat sa mga babala at kumilos ng naayon sa utos ng pamahalaan ukol sa mga sama ng panahon upang maligtas tayo sa kapahamakan.

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



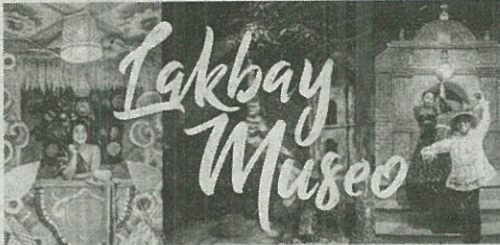
PAGLALAKBAY SA PILIPINAS SA LOOB NG DALAWANG ORAS, POSSIBLE NA!

DAHIL seven thousand one hundred seven (7,107) ang mga islang bumubuo sa arkipelago ng Pilipinas, mahabang habang panahon at malaking gastusan bago ito mapuntahan lahat.

Pero alam n'yo bang puwede n'yo nang malibot at malakbay ang ating kapuluan sa loob lamang ng dalawang oras? Iyan ay sa pamamagitan ng pinakabagong interactive museum na tinatawag na

wat rehiyon katulad ng Mayon Volcano ng Albay, Pahiyas Festival ng Lucban, Quezon, ang Sinadumpanan o tipikal na bahay ng mga Iwatan ng Batanes, Bale o walang pakong bahay ng mga Ifugao, at marami pang iba.

Mapanonood din sa museo ang mga pagtatanghal ng musika at sayaw ng bawat rehiyon gaya ng Singkil ng Maranao, Pangalay ng mga Tausug at Sama Dilaut, at iba



"Lakbay Museo" sa Pasay City.

Isa itong theme park na hango mula sa Nayong Pilipino sa Paranaque City at sa Clark, Pampanga, kung saan ang museum experience ninyo ay magiging kakaibang karanasan.

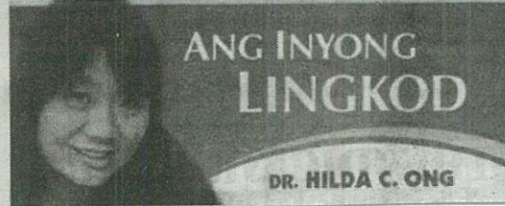
Makikita sa Lakbay Museo ang labing-isang rehiyon kabilang ang Ilocandia, Cagayan Valley, Cordillera Administrative Region, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog na kapwa kinabibilangan ng CALABARZON at MIMAROPA, Bicolandia, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, at ang Mindanao islands.

Tampok sa bawat rehiyon ang mga da best na makikita at ipinagmamalaki ng ba-

pa. Dahil nga isa tayong arkipelago, tampok din ang yaman at kagandahan ng katubigang pumapalibot sa bansa. Mismong mga eksperto na rin ang nagsasabi, bahagi tayo ng 'coral triangle region' kung saan nagmumula ang punla ng karagatan. Kaya't binibigyang-diin din ng museo ang pag-iingat sa ating katubigan mula sa marine pollution lalong-lalo na ang mga plastic.

Siyempre pa, hindi mawala ang pagkain. Mattikman sa 'palengke hall' ng interactive museum ang iba't ibang lutong ulam, merienda, kakanin at pampasalubong nating mga Filipino.

Tinitiyak ng pamunuan ng Lakbay Museo na magugustuhan ng mga millennial at



Generation X ang pagbisita dito. Bukod kasi sa busog ka na sa kaalaman at impormasyon hinggil sa ating bansa, marami ring out-of-school youth at local artisans ang nabibigyan nito ng trabaho.

Opisyal na bubuksan sa publiko ang museo sa July 12, 2019 na matatagpuan sa ground floor ng S Maison ng Conrad Manila, Pasay City. Ang halaga ng entrance ticket ay seven hundred ninety-nine pesos (Php 799.00), pero may one hundred pesos (Php 100.00) na discount para sa online booking.

Kaya, huwag maging dayuhan sa sariling bayan, ating lakbayin ang Pilipinas, at tuklasin ang ating sarili.