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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



'DENR needs funds to expand bamboo plantations'

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will ask Congress to allocate funds for the establishment of bamboo plantations under the Expanded National Greening Program (E-NGP).

The E-NGP has no budget for forest expansion this year due to the P2-billion cut in the DENR's 2019 budget.

Interviewed by the BUSINESSMIRROR, Director Sofio B. Quintana of the DENR's Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) said in a mix of Filipino and English that forest expansion under the E-NGP was virtually stopped this year due to budgetary constraints while the ERDB's budget for bamboo is allocated for research and development (R&D).

"We are still studying how much are we going to need but it will be for the expansion of the country's bamboo plantations next year," Quintana said.

He is optimistic that with Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu's recent pronouncement recognizing the importance of bamboo as an alternative to wood, coupled with its huge potential as a carbon sink, the massive cultivation of bamboo as mandated by law will now be given attention.

"I believe that with the establishment of bamboo plantations and the sustainable use of bamboo, we can help save our

forest," Quintana said.

He said he will work with the DENR's Forest Management Bureau (FMB) in seeking budget support from Congress for the establishment of more bamboo plantations and hopefully, fill the supply gap that will encourage wood industry players to embrace bamboo in lieu of the more expensive but supply-scarce wood species.

The DENR is the lead-implementing agency of the E-NGP, while the FMB acts as its overall coordinator.

"When you plant trees, you let these grow from 10 to 30 years then after cutting, you need to replant again. In the case of bamboo, once you plant it, it will provide sustainable supply, you don't have to replant and replant because it grows back," he said.

Bamboo is a giant grass species. It grows fast and survives under extreme weather conditions. It has long been used as construction material while young bamboo shoots are traditionally harvested for food.

Quintana said the ERDB has had several R&D initiatives on bamboo, including the production of disease-free planting materials and "engineered kawayan" or "e-kawayan" that enhances its use and purpose beyond simple handicraft materials.

The Philippines has reaffirmed its commitment to promote the use of bamboo as an alter-

native to wood after regional experts adopted a resolution establishing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Bamboo Network.

"Before, we are unable to strictly implement the law requiring the cultivation of bamboo under the E-NGP. Now, we will work to ensure to do it this time," said Quintana.

Executive Order 879 promotes the use of bamboo as an alternative to wood in the construction of school furniture. It also mandates the planting of bamboo.

Early this month, environment officials, scientists and researchers in Southeast Asia vowed to establish the Bamboo Network that will explore the vast potential of bamboo for environmental sustainability and economic resiliency.

It was the most prominent feature of a resolution adopted by participants to the first-ever Asean Bamboo Congress held in Iloilo City from August 12 to 16 organized by the DENR-ERDB which brought together various stakeholders in Asean, including representatives from the World Bamboo Organization, Brazil, Qatar and Peru.

Bamboo is widely recognized as a "versatile renewable resource" that protects the environment, improves the microclimate, controls soil erosion, protects riverbanks, reduces flash floods, serves as a windbreak, and sequesters atmospheric carbon efficiently.



DENR highlights potentials of bamboo vs climate change

THE vast potential of bamboo for environmental sustainability and economic resiliency will soon be further explored after environment officials, scientists, and researchers in Southeast Asia agreed to establish a regional network for the endeavor.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the move aims to help address the adverse effects of climate change.

The establishment of the ASEAN Bamboo Network was the most prominent feature of the resolution adopted by participants to the first-ever ASEAN Bamboo Congress held in Iloilo City from Aug. 12 to 16.

The five-day event organized by the DENR's Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) brought together government officials, scientists and researchers within the ASEAN region, as well as representatives from the World Bamboo Organization, Brazil, Qatar and Peru.

Cimatu described the resolution as a "decisive output" of the conference as it enabled formal commitment of the signatories towards "a sustainable and climate resilient future for the entire region."

"With this resolution, we are assuring that we will put our utmost endeavors in the continuous research and development in bamboo production technologies, as well as stronger linkages within the ASEAN region," Cimatu pointed out.

Bamboo is widely recognized as a "versatile renewable resource" that protects the environment, improves the microclimate, controls soil erosion, protects riverbanks, reduces flash floods, serves as windbreak, and sequesters atmospheric carbon efficiently.

It also has good properties comparable to most wood species and offers a variety of uses either in its unmanufactured form or as processed into engineered products, and as such, reduces the demand burden for wood-based products from the forests thereby arresting deforestation.

The attendees to the regional conference were convinced that engaging into bamboo production and the manufacturing of bamboo products provide job opportunities and steady income source among farmer groups, local communities, artisans and workers along the value chain.

Cory Martinez



LLDA doing too little to stop pollution in Laguna Lake: COA

BY PETER TABINGO

THERE were 786 business establishments around Laguna Lake with pending pollution cases but the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) was able to

monitor only 219 or 28 percent in 2018.

This means that for every 10 violators, the LLDA can keep an eye on less than three. The rest are able to dump their effluents into the lake's waters with little or

no concern about consequences.

This was disclosed in the 2018 audit of the LLDA which reported that five years after the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR) issued the guidelines under Administrative Order No. 2013-15, the LLDA has not been able to enforce the Water Quality Management Area (WQMA).

Although the agency was able to create the Area Water Quality Management Fund (AWQMF) in 2018, the fund's governing board has not convened once to discuss how to administer the P86.673-million government funding that was supposed to strengthen efforts to solve pollution of the Laguna Lake.

Government auditors noted that the LLDA was supposed to monitor the establishments' effluent volume discharge and type from at least once a year for the smallest and up to four times a year for the bigger industries.

"Only 219 or 28 percent of the 768 establishments with pending water pollution cases were monitored from January to June 30, 2018. It is our view that the monitoring must not be done on a selective basis and not delayed, otherwise the

law cannot be enforced to all violators," the COA said.

Auditors stressed that the purpose of random and frequent monitoring is to gather evidence and bolster pollution cases to hold the erring businesses accountable and protect residents around the area and the Laguna Lake's fishing industry.

"We recommend that the management impose sanctions on those LLDA officials who are found to be remiss in the performance of their functions," the COA said.

Moreover, it noted that cases against erring establishments dating back to 1996 have not been resolved so that penalties against them have not been imposed and collected.

The LLDA did not deny the finding but attributed its poor performance to lack of manpower and inadequate equipment particularly service vehicles for use by its Enforcement Division.

The agency said it has only four personnel in its Engineer I positions, excluding supervisors who can be deployed to moni-

tor the businesses emptying their wastewater into the lake and its waterways.

It added that there are only two aging vehicles for use not just for monitoring but also for resampling and other related functions.

On the increasing backlog of unresolved cases, the LLDA said there are only four hearing officers and one acting chairperson handling the pollution cases in the Public Hearing Committee (PHC).

The COA noted that the DENR approved LLDA's request for a fleet of service vehicles to improve its monitoring with budget allocated for the acquisition of two passenger vans, 17 multi-purpose vehicles and a mini bus.

"The LLDA purchased three 2017 Honda Mobilio, 16 Mitsubishi Xpander, and one Hyundai County. It was noted that the procurement was not in accordance with the authority to purchase MV granted by the DENR," the COA said.

In addition, auditors noted that one unit of Honda Mobilio had an upgrade specs including a 16-inch mag wheels which are considered

aesthetic features not allowed in the procurement rules.

The LLDA said it decided to switch to 19 units of MPVs instead of including two passenger vans because the former were "more appropriate and useful ...based on the actual needs of the agency."

As for the upgrade mag wheels for one of the Honda Mobilio, the LLDA claimed it was necessary to adapt to the road conditions on the Laguna de Bay shorelands where the said vehicle will be used.

The audit team, however, insisted that the LLDA had no basis to deviate from the DENR-approved list of procurement and that it was required by law to comply strictly with the specifications.

"We do not agree with Management's justification that the purchase of mag wheels was just incidental to the purchase of larger tires necessary to be more adapted to the road condition. Mag wheels is not a standard feature of the base model vehicle and is considered additional aesthetic feature which is not allowed under DBM Budget Circular No. 2010-2," it declared.



LLDA nalugi ng P29M sa kapabayaan

KUMITA dapat ng P29.47 milyon noong 2018 ang Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) kung hindi dahil sa lapses nila sa pagkolekta ng rental fee, ayon sa Commission on Audit (COA).

"[I]t is only when... delinquent operators voluntarily settle or renew their permits that their delinquency is acted upon by LLDA," ayon pa sa report.

Kinuwestiyon ng mga state auditor kung bakit 3.32 percent lamang ang nakolekta nila sa mga hindi nagbabayad ng renta sa fish pen at cage operators.

Natuklasan pa ng COA na higit sa 3,000 fish pen at cage operator ang hindi nagbayad ng rental fees noong 2018 dahil sa kapabayaan ng LLDA.

"Thus, they continue to operate and use the lake resources, contrary

to the provision of the above-mentioned guidelines that delinquents will no longer be allowed to operate and will be subject for demolition," ayon sa COA.

Dahil dito, kinalampag ng COA ang LLDA na mahigpit na bantayan ang mga hindi nagbabayad ng renta at ipagiba ang kanilang fish cage kung patuloy na babalewalain ang pagkautang.

Nangako naman ang LLDA na patuloy silang mangongolekta sa mga hindi nagbabayad ng renta at gagawa rin ng database ng aquaculture operators at ang pag-iisyu ng notices of registration at guidelines para sa annual registration ng fish pens/fish cages operators. Ang LLDA ay nasa ilalim ng DENR na naatasan mangalaga sa Laguna de Bay. **(JC Cahinhinan)**



LUMABAS SA PAGSUSURI NG PRRC LABORATORY "HINDI PUWEDENG KAININ ANG MGA ISDA NA NAHULI SA PASIG RIVER"

MARAMING mga insidente na naitala sa magkahiwalay na okasyon ukol sa panghuhuli ng malalaking isda sa Pasig River ngayong taon.

Noong Enero 28, 2019, iniulat ng Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) na ang mga residente ng Barangay 900 Punta Santa Ana, Maynila ay nakahuli ng mga malalaking tilapia.

Noong Hulyo 12, 2019, nag-post ang PRRC ng isang ulat na may nahuling 3-kilong tilapia sa Estero de San Miguel, Maynila. Kamakailan lamang, tampok sa mga balita ukol sa mga nahuling isda na tumitimbang na may halos 17 kilograms sa mga lungsod ng Mandaluyong at Makati.

Ang pagkakaroon ng mga isda sa Pasig River System ay napatunayan base sa 2009 na pag-aaral, "Biodiversity

Assessment of Pasig River and its Tributaries: Ecosystems Approach" ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB) na nagsasaad na may walong (8) species ng mga isda ay nakabalik na at ngayon ay nakatira sa makasaysayang ilog pagkatapos ng isang dekada ng rehabilitasyon ng PRRC at ng mga stakeholder nito.

Ang lima sa mga ito ay galing sa ibang bansa, ang dalawang species ay katutubong (native), habang ang Kanduli o Manila Sea Catfish (Arius manillensis) ay endemik.

Malugod na tinatanggap ng PRRC at Executive Director na si Jose Antonio E. Goitia ang positibong pag-unlad na



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

ito at kinikilala ang pagbabalik ng biodiversity bilang isa sa mga pinakamakabuluhang pagpapabuti at nagawa sa patuloy na rehabilitasyon at pagpapanumbalik ng Pasig River System na ngayon sa ika-20 taon.

Bilang bahagi ng responsibilidad ng lipunan sa pangangalaga ng kapakanan ng mga tao, lalo na ang mga komunidad ng mga ilog, sa pamamagitan ng kamalayan ng publiko, ang PRRC ay patuloy na nagpapaalala sa lahat na mag-ingat sa pag-inom ng mga isda ng Pasig upang maiwasan ang anumang negatibong epekto sa kalusugan.

Upang matukoy kung ang mga isda na nahuli sa Ilog Pasig ay ligtas para sa pagkonsumo ng tao, ang PRRC,

sa pamamagitan ng Environmental Management Division, ay nagsagawa ng isang koleksyon ng sampling ng isda at pagsusuri ng tisyu noong Pebrero 7, 2019 sa apat na magkakaibang lugar batay sa naiulat na kasaganaan ng mga isda.

Ang species ng mga isda na nakolekta gamit ang mga lambat ng isda ay Kanduli (Manila Sea Catfish) sa Nampindan; Tilapia (Nile Tilapia), Kanduli, at Banak (Mullet) sa Guadalupe Ferry, Makati; Banak sa Santa Ana, Maynila; at Banak at Bugaong (Grunter) na malapit sa Manila Bay. Ang mga sample ay indibidwal na timbang, sinukat at napanatili gamit ang yelo bago sumailalim sa pagsubok sa laboratoryo.



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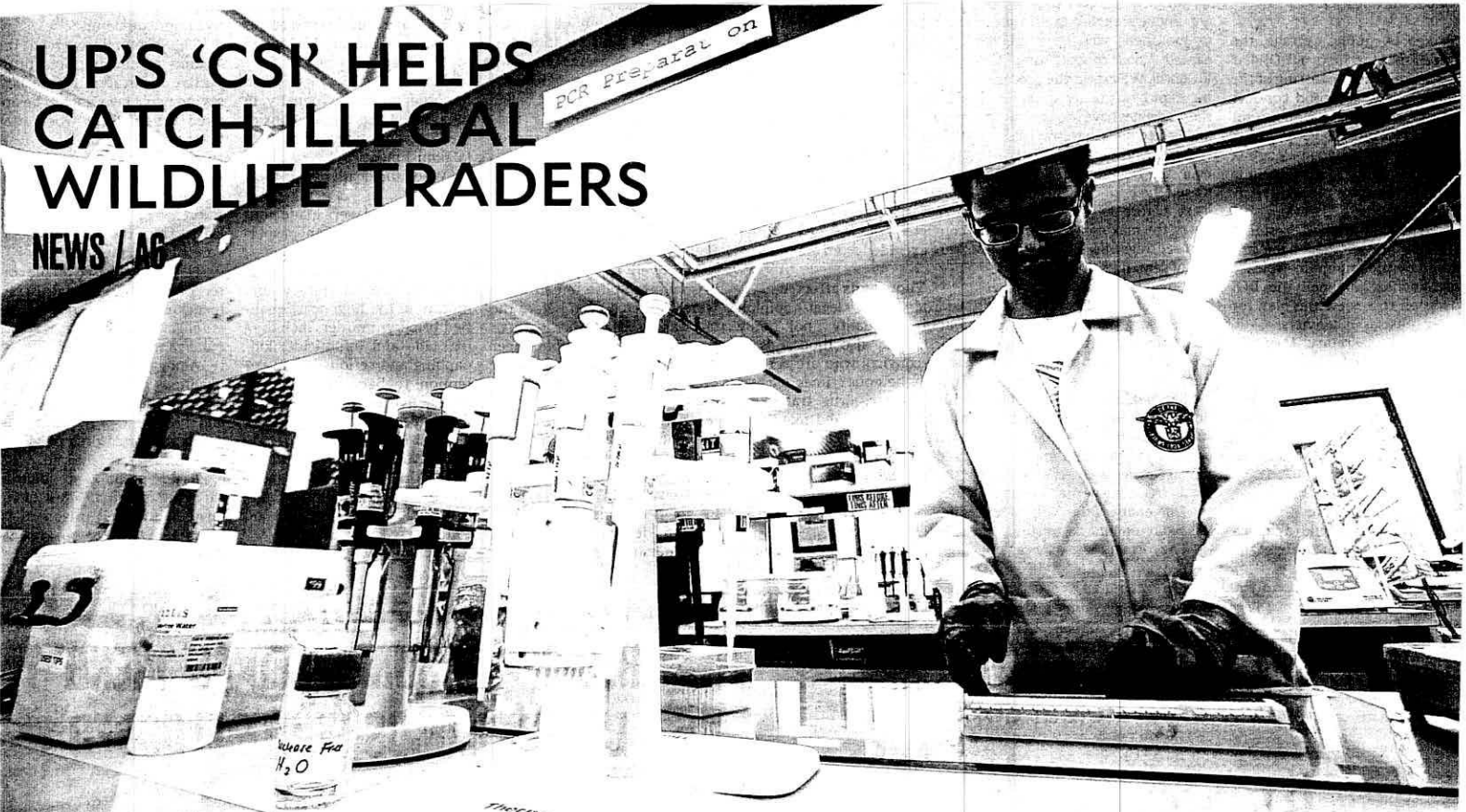
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DATE

UP'S 'CSR' HELPS CATCH ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADERS

NEWS / AG



ASSISTANCE The environment department is working with the DNA Barcoding Laboratory of the University of the Philippines in monitoring the trade on wildlife. —LYN RILLON



UP's 'CSI' helps catch illegal wildlife traders

By Jhesset O. Enano
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When officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) learned that some eateries in Barangay Pasil in Cebu City were selling steaming bowls of turtle stew, they first needed to make sure that the meat used for the sought-after soup was indeed from marine turtles.

Known as "pawikan larang," the orange-hued soup was also dubbed "pawer," as some locals believed that consuming it would boost their sex drive.

After undercover officials managed to buy two kilos of the cut-up meat, wildlife law enforcers turned to a laboratory in Quezon City, some 850 kilometers away, for answers.

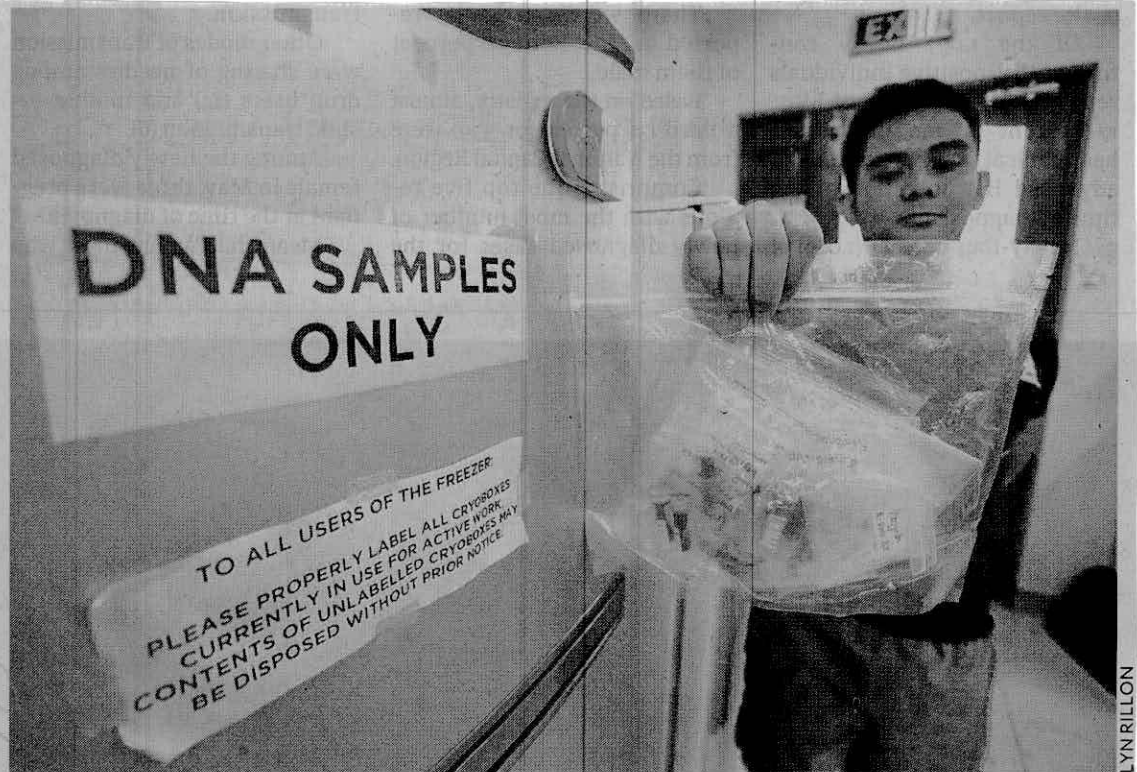
DNA barcoding

In a laboratory on the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman campus, scientists led by Ian Kendrick Fontanilla worked to identify the slaughtered animal.

Fontanilla's team employed a method called DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) barcoding, by looking at the molecular fingerprint of the DNA from tissue samples and reading selected genes unique to every species.

These barcodes are identified against a database of collected samples, which could help both scientists in their biodiversity research and law enforcement in prosecuting wildlife crime.

The team from the DNA Barcoding Laboratory of the UP Institute of Biology identified the meat as that of the endangered



EXAMINATION Masteral student John Gregor Roño shows samples from a killed animal sent by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for analysis at the University of the Philippines.

green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), prompting wildlife law enforcers to continue their operation.

In the laboratory, scientists and researchers use wildlife forensics to help government agencies in collaring environmental criminals who thought that they could get away with murder.

Their work is similar to the popular television series "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation"—but stripped of the drama.

Fontanilla, who now heads the laboratory after the death of its founder, Perry Ong, earlier

this year, said the use of wildlife forensics could be a significant tool in curbing the illegal wildlife trade.

In the past, law enforcers would simply rely on morphology, or the specimen's appearance, to identify the species confiscated from operations.

3,000 frozen pangolins

But these can be tricky, as some animals or plants may have been slaughtered, processed and cut up and, thus, cannot be easily identified.

The crafting of the public database for barcodes started as

early as 2008, but it was not until 2013 that scientists began a partnership with the DENR, when nearly 3,000 frozen pangolins were confiscated from a Chinese vessel in the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park.

To ascertain the species of the scaly mammals, the environment department, through its Biodiversity Management Bureau, then led by Theresa Mundita Lim, sought the help of Ong and his team to identify the species found onboard.

Bringing pangolin carcasses and tissue samples to the laboratory, the team discovered the



species to be the Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*), not the Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*)—a discovery that helped prosecute the Chinese fishermen for poaching.

Fontanilla said aside from wildlife forensics, the DNA barcoding method could also be used to assess the country's biodiversity and to study endangered and endemic species, as well as different population structures.

As a member of the Consortium for the Barcode of Life, the Philippines is committed to help populate the Barcode of Life Data System (BOLD), a sequence database that holds the DNA barcodes of thousands of species across the world.

As of October 2018, 27,639 sequences from 3,586 species found in the Philippines had been uploaded to the database, according to Fontanilla.

To further maximize wildlife forensics as a tool against environmental crime, more scientists and laboratories need to be engaged in this science.

"At the moment, the DENR and UP are trying to train personnel from the DENR regional offices and state universities through the support of the Global Taxonomy Initiative, so there will be a critical mass," Fontanilla said.

The goal is for different DENR regional offices to have their own local partners that have their own research laboratories, instead of everything being centralized in the laboratory in Quezon City.

Aside from the need for warm bodies, the sheer volume

of the country's rich biodiversity presents a daunting challenge.

"There is immense work that needs to be done. I'm quite certain that a lot of our species have already become extinct even before we can study them," he said. "There's not enough people and on the other hand, biodiversity is threatened. Time is not on our side."

For instance, he said, data on plants and invertebrates are still severely lacking, compared with those for vertebrates.

Only 141 species of plants from the Philippines have been uploaded to BOLD as of last year, even as plant species are estimated to range between 3,000 and 10,000.

Wild-Force lab

Fontanilla said a separate laboratory to be known as Wild-Force or Wildlife Forensics Laboratory—another brainchild by Ong—would soon undergo assessment, so that it could be more mainstreamed in government efforts to curb the illegal wildlife trade.

Despite these efforts, he said DNA barcoding should not be seen as the be-all and end-all in the fight against traffickers.

"This is just one aspect. The bigger challenge is how we stop consumers from actually buying illegal[ly acquired] wildlife," he said.

"Aside from strengthening our wildlife forensics, we should also be active in engaging our public why our biodiversity needs to be protected." INQ



Securing the future of PHL eagle

THE Philippine eagle, the country's national bird, is critically endangered due to the threat of habitat loss. The good news is that efforts to save and protect them are strong and relentless. Today, an estimated 400 pairs of Philippine eagles remain in the wild.

In November last year, forest guards found the seventh nesting site for Philippine eagles on Mount Apo in Mindanao, a sign that the critically endangered bird of prey continues to make its home and produce offspring in one of its natural habitats. This is considered a key development in the protection and preservation of the Philippines's national bird.

Last May, the quest to continue ensuring the survival of these raptors reached new heights when a pair of Philippine eagles bred in captivity at the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City—the 15-year-old male Geothermica and 17-year-old female Sambisig—was sent to Singapore's Jurong Bird Park.

Loaning the birds is part of an agreement between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS), a leading wildlife conservation group. It is also symbolic of the deep and valuable ties that the Philippines and Singapore have especially in common advocacies, such as environmental conservation and biodiversity protection.

Geothermica is the adopted eagle of geothermal leader Energy Development Corp. (EDC), while Sambisig is the adopted eagle of a chemical company. Both are considered at the prime age of breeding.

During their two-year stay at Jurong Bird Park, it is hoped that they will mate and produce eaglets which can be released in suitable, vacant habitats back in the Philippines. The pair and their future offspring can provide a gene pool that may be used in case natural calamities or health epidemics like avian flu threaten the eagles' population in the Philippines.

Eagles in the wild and in captivity

THE Philippine eagle's role on top of the food chain is considered crucial in keeping the balance of nature's ecosystem. An abundant Philippine eagle population also indicates a healthy state of forests.

Besides from being the natural habitat of the Philippine eagle, the country's highest peak, Mount Apo, also offers an abundance of geothermal energy—a form of clean and renewable energy that relies on heat coming from the Earth. Like the Philippine eagle, geothermal energy is dependent on a healthy vast forest cover for sustained production.

For this reason, central to EDC's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives is environmental conservation. At its 106-megawatt Mount Apo

Geothermal Project (MAGP), watersheds are well-maintained and forests are lush.

The 701-hectare protected geothermal reservation surrounding MAGP alone is home to 39 species of mammals and 165 species of birds, including the Philippine eagle.

For EDC, the fight to protect Philippine eagles must be waged in both captivity and the wild.

According to the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF), eagles bred in captivity can live up to 40 years and are considered more resilient to human handling and living in breeding facilities than their wildlife counterparts. This is why, in 2012, EDC adopted Geothermica under PEF's Adopt-an-Eagle program.

"Sending Geothermica to the WRS is an important step in our collective efforts to protect the Philippine eagle, the survival of which is inseparable from the protection of our biodiversity. Since Philippine eagles are threatened by the loss of forest cover and shooting activities, we hope to exhaust all efforts to protect one of the most precious treasures of our biological heritage," said EDC CSR Head Allan Barcena.

Continuing journey

BESIDES initiatives involving Geothermica, EDC also works closely with the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) for research and monitoring. EDC has consistently been recording sightings of the Philippine eagle within the reservation since 2011.

It is for this reason that the company collaborated with PEF in undertaking a Philippine eagle nest search within its area of operation. Based on data from PEF, it is indeed likely that there is an active Philippine eagle nest within EDC's AOR and that the reservation serves as the nesting pair's feeding ground.

According to PEF director for research and conservation Dr. Jayson C. Ibañez, protecting these nesting sites is crucial because Philippine eagles in the wild are loyal to their breeding sites. A nest found in Mount Apo in 1972, for instance, is still intact and being used.

At present, PEF has located 37 pairs of wild eagles with breeding nests in Mindanao. July marks the start of breeding season on the island, both for captive and those in the wild. Monitoring breeding adults and securing their health and safety as they produce and care for new eaglets help keep their bloodline alive.

"In the long run, we hope to see more eagles flying across their natural habitats, which means that we also have to work hard on increasing and maintaining forest cover. With the help of the Philippine Eagle Foundation and other institutions, we are optimistic that our efforts in both the wild and captivity will secure the future of the Philippine eagle," Barcena said.



Lizards, biodiversity's unsung heroes

THE current increase in dengue patients might have been prevented if the mosquito-eating lizards highly populate the country's communities.

They may not usually grab headlines or trend in social media compared with well-known biodiversity stars like whales or eagles, but lizards play a significant role in the environment.

By eating virus-carrying mosquitos, lizards can control the occurrence of dengue. In fact, areas riddled with dengue may possibly have a decreased population of insect-eating species like lizards.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 16,463 dengue cases have been reported this year in the Asean, particularly in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

World Lizard Day on August 14, the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) brought the spotlight on lizards, biodiversity's lesser-known heroes.

Besides controlling mosquito-spread diseases, lizards can also help with pests in farms. With lizards eating pests in crops, farmers can be assured of a better harvest.

Monitor lizards, for example, control the proliferation of rodents in plantations.

While they are important predators, lizards are important prey for many birds, snakes, and other animals, as well. Their presence is key in maintaining the balance in the food chain.

For example, the recently discovered fruit-eating Northern Sierra Madre forest monitor lizard (*Varanus bitatawa*) in the Philippines is food for the critically endangered Philippine eagle.

A healthy population of this forest monitor lizard would help ensure the survival of the rare eagle, which number in the wild has dwindled to only 400 pairs.

Lizards have exceptional characteristics that help them survive. They are able to escape predators by breaking off part of their tails when predators grab them. They are then able to regrow these tails.

Geckos particularly, have microscopic hairs,



PAULO MIGUEL KIM

called setae, that help them stick to surfaces, and jump and change direction in a split second. Some lizards can live up to 50 years.

Lizards can also grow as big as 10-feet long. The world's largest lizard, the Komodo dragon, has excellent vision and speed, seeing as far away as 985 feet, and running up to 13 miles per hour.

The Komodo National Park in Indonesia, a Unesco World Heritage Site, was established to conserve this unique lizard endemic to the archipelago.

Lizards, though, are under threat by habitat destruction, alien predators, pesticide use and climate change.

Based on a study published in *Science* journal, if the current global warming trends continue, 20 percent of the world's lizard species will be extinct by 2080.

Meanwhile, in the Asean, International Union for Conservation of Nature data show that of the 723 assessed lizard species, 97 are under threat (vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered). Of the 723 assessed species, 201 are endemic to the Asean region, and 23 of these endemic species are threatened.

While lizards have exceptional survival characteristics, they still need protection in order to thrive amid environmental threats.

On the World Lizard Day, the ACB reaffirmed its commitment to work with the Asean member-states in conserving important species like lizards, so that they can continue being among biodiversity's heroes.



Bill stopping agri land conversion filed

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

A lawmaker is calling for the halt in the conversion of agricultural lands into residential, commercial, industrial, and other non-agricultural uses in a bid to ensure enough food production for the country.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan has filed Senate Bill 256 or the Agricultural Land Conversion Ban Act which seeks to put a stop on the transformation of farm lands into other uses.

"Rapid urbanization and population growth have contributed to the problem of shrinking agricultural lands. We need farmers to feed the country. Farmers need farm lands to feed the country," Pangilinan said.

"This measure aims to protect farm lands for which government already spent to irrigate. This is also critical for food security in the country. Normally, prime agricultural lands are being targeted for

conversion," he added.

Since the agrarian reform was implemented in 1988 up to 2016, almost 100,000 hectares of agricultural lands, equivalent to the combined size of Metro Manila and Cebu City, have not produced food.

Data showed that Luzon suffers most from massive land conversion, making up 80.6 percent of the entire country's approved land conversions. This is followed by Mindanao with 11.6 percent and Visayas with 7.8 percent.

The bill seeks to amend Section 20 of the Local Government Code, requiring additional approval from the departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, and Environment and Natural Resources, as well as local government units before land reclassification and conversion.

"This additional requirement before the grant of a conversion permit is to ensure the suitability

of the conversion of an agriculture lot. This is timely due to the unbridled land conversion, legal or otherwise," Pangilinan said.

Under the bill, conversion of agricultural lands requires certification from DA indicating that such lands are not included among those classified for conversion or reclassification and that the land has ceased to be economically feasible for agricultural purposes.

For DAR, lands to be converted should not be programmed for distribution to agrarian reform beneficiaries while for DENR, the proposed reclassification should be ecologically sound.

"Studies show that agriculture takes a back seat among other land development projects as it has the smallest return on investment. This means that we need to make farming an attractive enterprise, because we all need food to live," Pangilinan said.

Bill seeking to ban land conversions filed in Senate

SEN. Francis Pangilinan filed Senate Bill (SB) 256, or the "Agricultural Land Conversion Ban Act," to address the problem of shrinking agricultural lands due to rapid urbanization and population growth.

Pangilinan said his measure seeks to preserve irrigated and irrigable lands to ensure food security.

"We need farmers to feed the country. Farmers need farm lands to feed the country," he said.

He added that since 1988, when agrarian reform was implemented until 2016, almost 100,000 hectares of agricultural land or the combined size of Metro Manila

and Cebu City, had not produced food.

"*Pinapanukala nating protektahan ang mga lupang sakahan na ginastusan na ng gobyerno sa patubig* (This measure aims to protect farm lands for which government already spent to irrigate)," Pangilinan said.

Data show that Luzon suffers most from massive land conversion, making up 80.6 percent of the entire country's approved land conversions; Visayas, 7.8 percent; and Mindanao, 11.6 percent.

SB 256 amends Section 20 of the Local Government Code, requiring additional approval from the Department

of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, as well as local government units before land reclassification and conversion.

"This additional requirement before the grant of a conversion permit is to ensure the suitability of the conversion of an agriculture lot. This is timely due to the unbridled land conversion, legal or otherwise," said Pangilinan, who owns a small vegetable farm in Cavite.

Under the bill, conversion of agricultural lands requires the following certifications: the total area of existing

agricultural land; that such lands are not included among those classified for conversion or reclassification under an existing law (Administrative Order 20, series of 1992); that the land has ceased to be economically feasible for agricultural purposes; that such lands are not distributed or programmed for distribution to agrarian reform beneficiaries; and that the proposed reclassification is ecologically sound.

Studies show that agriculture takes a backseat among other land development projects because it has the smallest return on investment.

"This means that we need to make farming an attractive enterprise, because we all need food to live," Pangilinan said.

The Agricultural Land Conversion Ban of 2019 is one of Pangilinan's pro-farmer legislation.

He is also the author of the recently signed Sagip Saka Act of 2019, which links farmers directly to buyers like government offices, to address the exploitative and unjust relationship between farmers and middlemen, and effectively raise farmers' incomes via entrepreneurial programs.

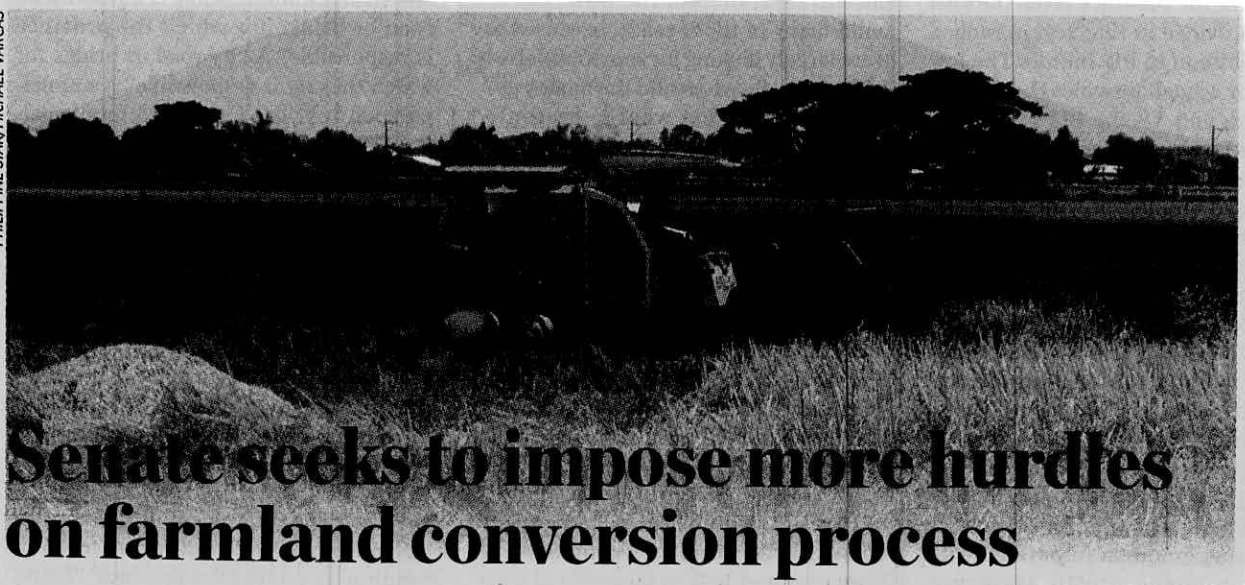
In the 18th Congress, Pangilinan filed 13

other agriculture- and environment-related bills such as SB 31 seeking to create the Coco Levy Trust Fund, SB 32 creating the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, SB 33 on improving post-harvest facilities, SB 34 promoting organic agriculture, SB 35 on expanded crop insurance, SB 36 on rainwater management, SB 38 on national land use, SB 40 on regulating single-use plastic, SB 257 on urban agriculture, SB 263 banning solid waste importation, SB 423 reducing food waste, SB 638 on electric and hybrid vehicles incentives, and SB 639 on national mangrove forest protection and preservation.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO



PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARGAS



Senate seeks to impose more hurdles on farmland conversion process

A MEASURE adding regulatory hurdles to the conversion of irrigated and irrigable agricultural land to residential, industrial and commercial zoning has been filed in the Senate.

Senator Francis N. Pangilinan, with Senate Bill No. 256, or the proposed "Agricultural Land Conversion Ban Act," said he was seeking to preserve farmland to ensure food security.

Mr. Pangilinan said some 100,000 hectares worth of agricultural land has been converted between 1988, when Republic Act (RA) 6657, or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, was implemented, and 2016.

He cited data from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) showing that 80.6% of approved land conversions were in Luzon; 7.8% in the Visayas, and 11.6 in Mindanao.

"We need farmers to feed the country. Farmers need farmland to feed the country," he said in a statement Sunday.

The bill amends RA 7160, or Local Government Code, by requiring applicants to obtain certifications from the Department of Agriculture (DA), DAR, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and local government units.

"This additional requirement before the grant of a conversion permit is to ensure the suitability of the conversion of an agriculture lot. This is timely due to the unbridled land conversion, legal or otherwise," Mr. Pangilinan said.

The certification from the DA should include a finding that the land has ceased to be economically feasible for agricultural purposes.

The DAR, for its part, will certify that the land is not due for distribution or programmed for distribution to agrarian reform beneficiaries; while the DENR will indicate if the proposed reclassification is ecologically sound.

At present, the Law only provides that agricultural land be reclassified by the LGUs through an ordinance, or by the President, upon recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority.

The new measure will also penalize violations with fines ranging from P150,000 to P300,000; and imprisonment of not less than six years.

For already-completed buildings or infrastructure, the property is liable to be confiscated for public use or auction. — **Charmaine A. Tadalán**



Kiko seeks ban on conversion of farmlands

BY VINCE NONATO

SEN. Francis Pangilinan has filed a bill seeking to prohibit the conversion of irrigated and irrigable agricultural lands for non-agriculture uses.

The proposed ban under Senate Bill No. 256, or the Agricultural Land Conversion Ban Act, would cover "all irrigated and irrigable lands... blocked and mapped according to standards by the Bureau of Soil and Water Management."

The bill sought to punish violators with six years' imprisonment and a fine of P150,000 to

P300,000. Persons who evict farmers from agricultural land to make it appear it was not being tilled would be punished with imprisonment of one to three years.

If the illegal conversion turned out to be irreversible, the bill proposed to allow the State to confiscate the building or infrastructure, so the local government unit could convert it to public use or put it up on public auction.

The bill sought to allow only the conversion of land that "has ceased to be economically feasible for agricultural purposes," as certified by the Department of Agriculture.

For such lands, the bill would also require additional documentation, such as a certification from the Department of Agrarian Reform that it was not programmed for distribution, and a certification from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that the reclassification would be ecologically sound.

In a statement yesterday, Pangilinan lamented that from 1988 to 2016, 97,592.5 hectares of agricultural land – or the combined size of Metro Manila and Cebu City – have stopped producing food.

He blamed rapid urbanization and population growth for the

loss of agricultural land and lack of food security

"Kailangan natin ang mga magsasaka para kumain ang bayan. Kailangan ng mga magsasaka na may lupang sinasaka para pakainin ang bayan (We need farmers to feed the country. Farmers need farm lands to feed the country)," he said.

"Kritikal ito para matiyak ang food security ng ating bansa. Madalas, prime agricultural lands pa ang pinupuntiryang i-convert (This is critical to ensure our country's food security. Often, prime agricultural lands were being targeted for conversion)," he added.



Editor: RAMON M. LIM

AS A MATTER OF FACT

SARA SOLIVEN DE GUZMAN

Gina Lopez – our modern day hero

* * *

Today, is National Heroes' Day. Of course we thank the many heroes and martyrs who have fought and lost their lives to protect our nation. But today, we also have heroes who continue to burn the midnight oil and put their lives at stake for our country.

The late Gina Lopez who passed away just last week is a true model for Filipinos to look up to. Her perseverance was invincible. She was an epitome of a "real" modern-day hero. From her pure deeds I learned that: Whether in the quest of virtue or in the pursuit of material gain, whether in the achievement of glory or in the search for gold, you need that sturdy quality that knows no doubt, no wavering, no discouragement. When you see a woman who made a name for herself, one whom destiny seems to have made its favorite child, don't you deceive yourselves into believing that she has achieved eminence through mere good fortune or luck. Known to the world is her brilliant achievement, but unknown to the world are the long, dreary years of unremitting and patient labor, of obscure and wearing drudgery that precede the dazzling and joyous day of her triumph. Thomas Edison is often quoted to have said of what men call genius that it is two percent inspiration and ninety-eight percent perspiration. This was Gina's dedication because she loved our country and our people. Rest now dear warrior, thank you!

The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow





Gina

It has been a week since Gina Lopez left us. I am still trying very hard to dismiss that reality in my mind and in my heart. Very rarely do I feel a death has truly left this world poorer.

This is because our country can use more Ginas. She gets things done. And that's not all... Gina is the kind of leader with a genuine love for this country and our people. She has no personal hidden agenda. She makes us hopeful good will triumph in the end.

She came from one of the traditional old and rich families. But she threw away all the privileges that went with it by spending 20 years of her youth with the poorest of the poor in Africa.

DEMAND AND SUPPLY



BOO CHANCO

I was at the ABS-CBN newsroom on the day Gina arrived to assume leadership of the network's foundation. Before long, she made it clear she was not content with just the usual disaster relief activities. She wanted to make an impact where it mattered. She wanted to leverage the network's public clout to serve

social needs.

She quickly focused on helping children from poor families. Seeing so much raw human resources being wasted by poverty must have broken Gina's heart.

A number of programs came to life... feeding programs at schools to nourish not just the body, but also the mind. Sineskwela was born to help children learn their school lessons in a fun and painless manner.

Gina's immersion with the poor led her to realize that we have a serious child abuse problem. Parents frustrated with their economic deprivation often took it out on their children, physically abusing them.

Gina's solution was the hotline Bantay Bata. Anyone can report cases of child abuse and with the help of the police and social workers, a team will investigate and if needed, take the abused child into their protection.

Soon there were too many abused children under the wings of Bantay Bata that Gina decided to build a children's village in Bulacan. The sanctuary enabled battered children to recover physically and psychologically.

The other big love of Gina is Mother Nature. Someone mentioned how the La Mesa watershed area had been denuded and it sparked a fire in Gina's mind. She was going to save the watershed area.

One morning Gina asked me to join her in a helicopter ride to inspect the watershed area that must be reclaimed from *kaingeros*. It was huge. She must have seen the skeptical look in my face, so she said we can do it.

And she did. Some forest rangers were killed in the process, but the La Mesa watershed area was reforested just as Gina said it would be.

Lesson learned: Never tell Gina a project is impossible because it is too big or complicated. That will simply get her juices flowing to prove you wrong.

The next big project she took on was cleaning up the Pasig River. Well... she managed to get the factories discharging their waste water to clean up. But the domestic sewage from informal settlers along the banks was a tough challenge.

There were also the rivers and esteros that flow into the Pasig. Unless they were cleaned, no river clean-up is sustainable.

So, Gina started cleaning up Estero de Paco. That was close to home for me. I first smelled the stench of that estero as a five-year-old kindergarten kid in Paco Catholic School. I thought that was its natural state.

Because much of the garbage in the estero came from the Paco Market, Gina decided to clean up and rehabilitate the market as well with the help of then Mayor Alfredo Lim. Again, the impossible happened and the estero was cleaned and flowers started to bloom along its banks.

To make the clean-up sustainable, some residents were recruited and trained as river warriors to protect the estero.

Her brief stint at the DENR showed her uncompromising commitment to some basic principles. Here is how she summed up her vision for an environmentally sound nation:

"I would like to have a country where our natural resources are conserved. I want to see mangroves everywhere so that we are protected from climate change. I want to see bamboo everywhere because we can (profit from that)..."

"I envision a country without poverty. Our people would have enough food to put on the table, enough money to send their kids to school. We can make it happen, and I feel that the way to do it is by creating models on the ground to show that it can be done."

Money, to Gina, was only a means to make life better for everyone. Her only interest in ABS-CBN's bottom line is how much of it she can use for her many projects. We joked that whatever Gabby earned, Gina spends... in the service of the Filipino, of course.

There are many more wonderful things Gina Lopez brought into this world than my thousand-word limit can cover. I have not met a person so absolutely focused on what she wanted to do with her life. And when she bites into a cause, she doesn't let go.

In a sense, Gina's strength is her weakness. Her commitment to natural healing prevented her from considering other avenues. Integrity is everything for her. If she believes in something, there is no compromise.

Gina is one of a kind and we are just grateful that she spent the most productive years of her life fighting causes in our country no one else had the guts and the heart to commit to.

Our challenge now is how to carry on where Gina left off. Surely Bantay Bata, Bantay Kalikasan and her many other causes deserve to be followed through as if Gina was still deep in the fight.

Gina believes she can fly. We must never say impossible, right Gina?

Boo Chanco's e-mail address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter @boochanco



Walang katulad si Gina Lopez

STRIKE SA SERBISYO



Strike Revilla

@strikerevilla

Tulala ako noong nakaraang Lunes matapos na marinig ko sa balita na pumanaw na si Gina Lopez na labis kong ikinabigla dahil hindi ko naman nabalitaan na mayroon na pala itong sakit.

Hindi naman ako gano'n kalapit kay Ms. Gina pero hindi naman lihim kung paano siya namuhay sa kabila ng kaniyang kinagisnang karangyaan na ipinagpalit niya para lamang makapaglingkod sa tao, lalo na sa mga mahihirap.

Sa mga hindi nakakakilala sa kanya, siya ay si Regina Lopez na lumilingon sa tawag na Gina at mas kilala bilang anti-mining, environment activist at dating Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary na sa tingin ko ay isa sa pinakapektibong nanungkulan sa nasabing posisyon.

Umuusok ang account ko sa social media dahil sa dami ng nanghihinayang kay Ms. Gina na naging secretary ng DENR noong taong 2016 ngunit lubhang napakaikli ng kaniyang panunungkulan dahil sa na-reject siya ng Commission on Appointments (CA) noong 2017.

Maski ako ay dumoble ang paghanga ko kay Ms. Gina nang malaman ko na sa kabila ng kayamanan ng pamilya nito dahil sila nga ang may-ari ng ABS-CBN ay nagtungo pala ito sa mga mahihirap na bansa tulad ng Africa para makipamuhay sa mga pinakamahihirap na tao.

Kay Ms. Gina, kasama mo ang aking dalangin sampu ng aking pamilya, saan ka man naroroon.



Angat dam close to normal level

WITH the amount of rainfall expected this month, Angat Dam's water level is expected to go beyond the 180-meter minimum operating level (MOL) by the end of August, the weather bureau said.

"That's a very big possibility," Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa)

hydrologist Jason Bausa said.

The reservoir's level dipped below the MOL because of the El Niño phenomenon, prompting officials to withhold supply for irrigation.

As of Saturday, Angat's water level was at 178.30 meters.

"That level is just 1.70 meters below the MOL — strong day-

long rainfall there may already raise Angat's water to the MOL," Bausa said.

He said the expected rainfall this month would further raise Angat's water level above the 180-meter level.

The weather bureau had said four tropical cyclones might hit the

Philippines this month.

Tropical cyclones, the southwest monsoon or *habagat*, thunderstorms and low pressure areas are among rain-bearing systems that could affect the country in August, the weather bureau added.

On Saturday, Pagasa forecaster Ezra Bulquerin said severe Tropical

Storm "Ineng," which left the country on Saturday, would continue to enhance the southwest monsoon.

Luzon, in general, would continue to have rains, he said.

A low pressure area may enter the Philippine area of responsibility this week and would be named "Jenny." **PNA**



Tubig sa Angat dam pa-normal na

MALAPIT na sa minimum normal operating level ang tubig sa Angat dam.

Kahapon ang lebel ng Angat ay 178.63 metro, tumaas ng 0.33 metro mula sa 178.30 metro noong Sabado ng umaga.

Ang normal water operating level nito ay 180 metro. Ang normal high water level naman nito ay 210 metro.

Bahagyang tumaas din ang tubig sa La Mesa dam. Ito ay 76.80 metro kahapon ng umaga, tumaas mula 76.71 metro. Ang normal high water level nito ay 80.15 metro.

Ang dalawang dam ang pangunahing pinagkukuhanan ng isinusuplay na tubig sa Metro Manila at mga karatig na probinsya.
—Leifbilly Begas



Angat returning to minimum operating level

ANGAT Dam water level may not just reach the 180 meters minimum operating level (MOL) by end of this month but may even surpass it, hence brightening water supply prospects in service areas in Luzon.

"That's a very big possibility," Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) hydrologist Jason Bausa said.

Bausa added the expected amount of rainfall this month of August can help increase the dam's water level.

Angat Dam's water earlier this this level dipped below the MOL due to rain-

fall shortage amidst onslaught of drought-driving El Niño phenomenon.

Government's protocol is to suspend release of Angat water for irrigation if water dips to the MOL to ensure water supply for Metro Manila.

Angat's water level as of 6 a.m. Saturday was at 178.30 meters already, the data showed.

"That level is just 1.70 meters below the MOL — strong day-long rainfall there may already raise Angat's water to the MOL," said Bausa.

Bausa added expected rain this month is boosting Angat water's potential to go up past its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

PNA



ANTICOMPETITIVE BEHAVIOR

PCC PROBES ALLEGED RIGGING OF KALIWA DAM PROJECT

BIDDING

By Roy Stephen C. Canivel
@roycanivel_INQ

The country's antitrust body is looking into the alleged rigging of a bidding for a big-ticket China-funded project under the Duterte administration's "Build, Build, Build" initiative.

The project is the P18.7-billion Kaliwa Dam Project in Quezon province, a top official of the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) told the Inquirer.

This developed after a document issued by the Commission on Audit (COA) to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System claimed the bidding for

the project and the awarding of the contract were questionable. It was a "negotiated contract," it claimed.

A Chinese state-owned company won the bidding held in December last year, besting two other Chinese contractors who were disqualified for failing to comply with the requirements, which COA claimed seemed intentional.

"The PCC will confer with the COA and obtain more detailed information about its findings on the conduct of the bidding for the Kaliwa Dam project," PCC Chair Arsenio Balisacan said.

Under the competition law, the PCC could go after entities ac-

cused of anticompetitive behavior, such as rigging of a bidding.

According to the MWSS, the New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project has been planned since 1967 to provide another major water source for Metro Manila.

The detailed engineering, design, and construction of the project was awarded to China Energy Engineering Corp. under the Duterte administration.

According to COA's audit observation memorandum, there were two other bidders—the consortium of Guangdong Foreign Construction Co. Ltd. and Guangdong Yuantian Engineering Co.,

and Power Construction Corp. of China Ltd.

The memorandum, dated June 10, said the consortium failed eligibility and technical requirements. COA noted the consortium did not have a business permit and a license from the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board, despite claims that it had conducted or completed projects in the Philippines before.

Power Construction Corp., on the other hand, got disqualified after giving a financial bid of P13 billion, which was 6.91 percent higher than the approved budget for the contract.

This, the COA said, was de-

spite the fact that the bidders were already informed beforehand that a bid in excess of the approved budget "shall be automatically rejected."

"In summary, it can be deduced that the two bidders/contractors were included merely to comply with the 'at least three bidders' requirement as stated under the Procurement law," the document read.

The PCC has a memorandum of agreement with COA which, Balisacan said, provided for the sharing of information between the two agencies.

"Under the Philippine Competition Act, bid-rigging occurs

when competitors manipulate the outcome of bids, leading to higher costs passed on to consumers and taxpayers. This conduct is punishable both criminally and administratively," he added.

Whether this case will merit a full blown PCC investigation remains to be seen. But this brings increased scrutiny to the Chinese-funded project.

The competition law offers a leniency program, which offers either immunity from suit or reduction of fines based on certain conditions. Under the law, an administrative penalty could be slapped with a fine of up to P250 million.
INQ





MWSS expects to complete Quezon consultations next month for Kaliwa Dam

METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) expects to complete next month the required assemblies with indigenous communities of Quezon province, ahead of the other requirements for the construction of Kaliwa Dam.

In a statement Sunday, the agency said it was about to complete through the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) the community assemblies that form part of the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process for six clusters of IP communities in Quezon.

"Another FPIC process will be held for Rizal Province," it said, referring to the compliance measure under Republic Act No. 8173 or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Acts.

On Aug. 23, MWSS and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Environment Management Bureau (EMB) jointly held the first of a series of public hearings to evaluate the water agency's mitigating measures to address possible disturbances in the affected communities of the Kaliwa Dam project.

The dam will be the new water source of MWSS' two water concessionaires for Metro Manila — Manila Water Co., Inc. for the east zone and Maynilad Water Services, Inc. for the west zone. The two will equally share the water from the dam, which will bridge the Philippine capital's supply deficit and reduce its dependence on Angat Dam.

The public hearing is in line with MWSS' application for Kaliwa Dam's environmental compliance certificate (ECC), the document that will pave the way for construction as it will affirm that the project will not cause a significant negative impact on the environment.

MWSS said the earlier hearings were "considered a success because the concerns of the main stakeholders, namely the indigenous peoples, farmers, pro-environment NGOs (nongovernment organizations), affected residents, have been heard and addressed particularly the project's impacts on community health, welfare and the environment."

It said a number of environmental public consultations have been held in

the previous years but it was only on Friday that a joint consultation was conducted with DENR.

It said the hearing was "generally peaceful" but was marred by a walk-out allegedly by a group of Dumagat tribe members, who questioned the nine-day notice before the hearing. It said the group of mostly young boys dressed in local costume was accompanied by various NGOs opposing the construction of the dam.

MWSS said a notice of public hearing had been published thrice between Aug. 8 and 16. It said despite the presentation of proof of publication, the group did not return to the venue of the public hearing.

The next hearing will be on Aug. 27 at the Ynares covered courts on Magsaysay Ave. in Teresa, Rizal. Another hearing will be held on Aug. 28 in Infanta, Quezon, and Sept. 2 in Tanay, Rizal.

"MWSS will submit an assessment report on the results of the public hearings and the DENR-EMB will then decide of MWSS' application," the agency said. — **Victor V. Saulon**



Turn trash rant into policy urged

An environmental coalition saw a silver lining in President Duterte's latest rant against foreign trash, expressing hope that it would turn into a strong policy against garbage exportation by the developed countries.

The coalition, along with over a dozen public interest groups had earlier asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to completely and permanently ban all waste imports.

"If a complete ban is not enforced, would the authorities have enough trained personnel to actually sniff out all shipments of 'recyclables' that could contain hazardous materials in all ports?" the group asked.

Last Wednesday, Duterte, speaking at the

inauguration of a solar power project in Tablas, Romblon, lambasted developed countries anew for shipping their garbage to the Philippines in the guise of recycling.

"We had that experience of Canada and the rest of the industrialized countries exporting their garbage in the guise that they can still be used," the President said. "I'd like to say to the Western countries, do not make us a garbage dump."

"The president's abhorrence against garbage from overseas being dumped into our ports, which is shared by many if not all Filipinos, should be translated into a robust policy that will proactively prevent such a bad practice from continuing," the coalition said.



Caloocan goes on cleanup drive in 5 barangays

By Jun David

THE Caloocan City government, through the Environment and Management Department, recently spearheaded the clean-up drive in five barangays of the city.

About 360 residents volunteered for the program dubbed "3rd Quarter Clean-Up Drive" in Barangays 14, 16, 18, 20, and 22.

Members of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources also joined the program.

The Clean-up Drive was led by the city government on orders of City Mayor Oscar Malapitan, who was delighted by the people's participation in making the city's environment clean.

The mayor hoped more citizens will join the clean-up drive in the coming days.

Meanwhile, the city distributed "biocarts" (kariton) to be used by the barangays in maintaining cleanliness in their respective surroundings.


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TULONG-TULONG VS POLUSYON

MGA ka-idol, marami ang nagtatanong, ano ba ang polusyon na kinahaharap na problema hindi lang ng Pilipinas kundi lahat din ng iba't ibang bansa.

Para sa akin, ang polusyon ay isang pagbabago sa kapaligiran na masamang nakaapekto sa kalusugan ng mga halaman, hayop at tao.

Ang polusyon ay may iba't ibang klase mula sa hangin, lupa, tubig at ingay.

Ang polusyon sa hangin ay galing sa makabagong teknolohiya sa anyo ng usok mula sa mga pagawaan at sasakyan, sigarilyo, pagsusunog ng anomng bagay at iba pa.

Ang polusyon sa lupa ay sanhi ng pagkawala ng disiplina ng mga tao o mamamayan sa isang komunidad at nakikita ito sa pagkakalat ng basura.

Ang polusyon sa ingay ay dulot ng sobrang dami ng populasyon o bilang ng mga bagay sa isang komunidad at gamit gaya ng mga sound system, tambutso ng sasakyan.

Ang polusyon sa tubig ay naidudulot ng pagkawala ng disiplina ng mga tao o mamamayan sa isang komunidad tulad ng paggamit ng mga mang-ingisda ng pampasabog.

Kaya nga sa aking sariling pananaw na rin, ang sanhi ng polusyon ay ang kapabayaang o sadya nating mga gawa.

Sino pa ba ang may kakayahan para pangalagaan ito at magbigay ng aksyon? Siguradong kung kaya itong pangalagaan, kaya rin nila itong pabayaan.

Hindi na nga ito masyadong napagtutuunan ng pansin, nagagawa pa ang mga masasamang bagay na maaapekto sa kalikasan dahil wala man lang pakialam ang mga tao sa kanilang mga aksyon.



Hindi nila alam na halos lahat ng napakikinabangan nating bagay ay nanggagaling sa kalikasan. Sa kanila rin babalik lahat ang mga negatibong epekto kapag tuluyan nang nasira ang kalikasan dahil sa polusyon.

Ayon sa ulat ng World Health Organization (WHO), pinakamalaking naapektuhan ng air pollution ang mga umuunlad na bansa kagaya ng Pilipinas.

At mas mataas umano ang antas ng polusyon sa mga umuunlad na siyudad na gaya ng Maynila kumpara sa mga mauunlad na siyudad na kasing-laki nito.

Sa kasalukuyan, masyado tayong abala sa mga makabagong teknolohiya. Hindi natin alam na may mga bagay na napababayaang at nakalilimutan na agad'yung ibang bagay na minsan kapaki-pakinabang.

Mabuti na lamang at may isang ahensiya ng gobyerno tulad ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na talagang pinagtutuunan ngayon ang problema sa polusyon.

Pero kung gusto natin malutas ang isyung ito, kailangan nating magkaisa at magtulong-tulong dahil walang mangyayari kung iisa lang ang kumikilos.

Dapat na sama-sama tayo sa iisang diwa at layunin at gawin ito para hindi lang sa ating bansa, kundi para na ring isang hudyat sa iba't ibang bansa ng pagbabago.



MMT says OGPI complying with mine regulations

By Ben Moses Ebreo

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Members of the Multipartite Monitoring Team (MMT) here said OceanaGold Philippines, Inc. (OGPI), which operates the Didipio gold-copper mine, is complying with mining laws and regulations in its area of operations.

Forester Constante Espiritu, Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO) of Dupax town and team member, said the MMT conducted the assessment and evaluation of OGPI's compliance with mining law and regulations in June this year and noted no serious and critical violations.

"In general, the MMT did not find any violation of OGPI within their area of operations," Espiritu said, but lamented the refusal of barangay officials to allow them to conduct a water sampling activity in the Camgat-Surong river.

The water sampling is necessary to know the current quality of the river, as it is murky due to the small-scale mining activities near it, Espiritu added.

He said the MMT, in a request letter dated June 6, 2019, sought the permission of Didipio Barangay Captain Erenio Bobola and Barangay Kagawad Cecilia Bahag to accompany the team in the water sampling for laboratory analysis, but they were not allowed.

"They refused and told us that either we might be stoned by the anti-mining advocates there (or) the small scale miners living near the murky river," Espiritu said.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau officials said the Camgat-Surong river is said to be the wastewater dumping area for small-scale miners near the gold-copper project of OceanaGold.

"Our small-scale miners blame OGPI for polluting the Camgat-Surong river, but the company is not involved in causing the water to be murky, instead it comes from the small-scale operations. Water sampling for laboratory test is the only way to check if the river is really polluted or not," Espiritu said.

The MMT was created under the Mine Rehabilitation Fund Committee to monitor and oversee the compliance of OGPI on mining law regulations, among others.

Apart from Espiritu, MMT members who requested the water sampling activity were MGB representatives Emely Delmendo and Jose Delos Santos Jr., Charles Tomas of DENR-Quirino, religious sector representative Fr. Enrique Tiongson, Ben Guillermo of NGO Quirino, Giovaanie Taguinod of PENRO Nueva Vizcaya, Tito Tanguilig of PLGU Nueva Vizcaya, Joemel Sugue of LGU Quirino, Cristina Milton of LGU Kasibu, and OGPI representatives Manuel Ordonez Jr. and Mark Saclao.

Didipio Barangay Captain Erenio Bobola is also a member of the MMT.



Ban on fireworks display, releasing of balloons pushed

In an effort to intensify its campaign to protect the environment, Diocese of Tagbilaran Bishop Alberto Uy has called for a ban on fireworks display and the practice of releasing balloons which are both environmentally destructive.

"Fireworks and the practice of releasing balloons whenever there is a celebration add to environmental wastes and pollution. I am appealing to the faithful to please stop these practices," Uy said.

Studies show that most of the balloons released later land on bodies of water and become a threat to marine life and the marine ecosystem as a whole. Fireworks, on the other hand, are known pollutants that worsen the quality of the air that we breathe.

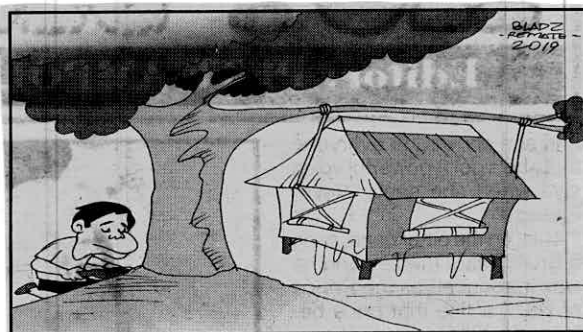
"I call on all sectors of society to do their share in caring for the environment and to stop environmentally destructive practices for the sake of the next generation," the prelate said over Church-run Radio Veritas. "Let us stop releasing balloons and using fireworks display."

A 2017 report by the Ocean Conservancy said, the Philippines ranks third in Asia among countries that pollute the seas with plastic gar-

bage.

Bishop Uy, earlier, encouraged the faithful to take part in the diocese's annual tree planting activity on September 1, to coincide with the start of the observance of the Season of Creation which ends on October 4 on the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi.

"Caring for the environment is one way of loving and serving God," Uy stressed. **(Christina I. Hermoso)**



EDITORIAL

MAGTANIM NG PUNO

BAHA kahit saan ang inaabot natin ngayon at napatunayan sa paglalaro ng bagyong Ineng at habagat na parehong maulan.

Habang nagbubuhos ng ulan ang bagyo sa Luzon, hinahatak naman nito ang habagat mula karagatan ng Mindanao at West Philippine Sea.

Kaya naman, tinamaan ng baha hindi lang ang Cagayan Valley kundi Ilocos Norte at ang habagat naman ay tumama sa Kabisayaan, Metro Manila at iba pa.

Ang mga mauunlad na lugar ang higit na tinamaan, lalo na ang mga puno na ng mga proyektong pangkaunlaran na halos puro sementado na ang mga lupa at halos wala na ring nakatayong mga malalaking puno.

Sa ibang salita, wala na ang mga puno na humihigop ng tubig-ulan at baha at ang tanging magagawa laban sa baha ay paggawa ng mga drainage o kanal na daluyan ng tubig palayo sa isang lugar at maaaring patapon sa mababang lugar, ilog o dagat.

Ang masama sa baha, sinisira ang lahat, kasama na ang mga pagdaloy ng negosyo, pagpasok sa eskwela at trabaho na may kasama pang mga sakit gaya ng leptospirosis.

Kailangang ibalik sa abot ng ating makakaya ang dating anyo at pwesto ng kalikasan sa ating mga lugar.

Halimbawang gumagawa tayo ng bahay o subdibisyon, hindi masamang maglaan tayo ng espasyo para sa mga punongkahoy na kung iisipin ay hindi lang pangsip-sip sa tubig-baha kundi panggagalingan din ng hanging ating nilalanghap para mabuhay tayo nang malusog at lumaki sa pangangatawan.



CAMPUS BRIEFS

DLSU-SHORE, WWF Phils. team up for coral reef research

De La Salle University - Br. Alfred Shields FSC Ocean Research Center (DLSU-SHORE) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines embarked on consecutive reef research trips last April and May of this year. Dubbed "Designing of Monitoring and Evaluation System for Coral Reef Resilience and Fisheries Sustainability in Northeast Palawan through Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), or Network of MPAs," the collaboration, which was funded by WWF-Singapore, covered the areas of Tubbataha, Cagayancillo islands, Honda Bay, and Taytay, Palawan. It also included an assessment of the ship grounding sites of Ming Ping Yu and the USS Guardian. According to DLSU-SHORE director Dr. Wilfredo Licuanan, both of these sites are recovering. He also added that based on the team's continuous monitoring, they were able to hypothesize



DLSU-SHORE and WWF Phils. representatives COURTESY OF WWF

that the corals in Arena atoll in Narra, Palawan may be climate-resilient. In addition to the research efforts, DLSU-SHORE and WWF Philippines held reef assessment training in Puerto Princesa. Delegates from the Tubbataha Management Office, Western Philippines University, Palawan State University, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development,

Office of the Provincial Agriculture, Office of the Puerto Princesa City Agriculture, Provincial Environment Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Smart Seas Philippines attended the program. These efforts underscore the importance of generating the information needed to save coral reefs.



BW/LEAN S. DAVAL, JR.

PART of the mangrove area inside the My Paradise Beach Resort in Barangay Tuban, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur.

DAVAO: STA. CRUZ, DAVAO DEL SUR

Sta. Cruz community replace mangroves destroyed by monsoon waves

BIG WAVES caused by the southwest monsoon, which has been prevailing for weeks, destroyed the seawall, breakwaters, houses and mangroves in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur last week. Over the weekend, the coastal community came together to plant more mangroves to replace those destroyed and as part of an ongoing tree-planting program. The project is led by San Miguel Brewery Inc. (SMB), which has a facility in the town, together with the local government and residents. SMB Davao Human Resources Manager Jovic Bernardo said most of the mangroves destroyed were part of the 2,500 they planted last year under the Trees Brew Life-Buhayin ang Kalikasan Project, which is now on its 10th year. She narrated that they have recorded a survival rate of up to 90%, until last week. "But our contribution to the success of this program is miniscule compared to the threat of climate change and global warming now in our midst. Typhoons are much stronger now during rainy season while temperatures during the summer continue to reach new heights. It is therefore imperative for the private sector to devote its resources to programs seeking to mitigate the impact of climate change like tree growing initiatives," said Engineer Wilfredo R. Camaclang, Davao plant manager.

PARKS

The program also covers tree planting activities in unproductive, denuded, and degraded forestlands in line with the government's Expanded National Greening Project. Mr. Camaclang said they are also coordinating with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the local government and people's organizations for developing public green spaces. "We will focus on re-greening parks and communal areas and adopt forest parks so that we will have more green spaces where our families can commune with nature," he said. — **Maya M. Padillo**



"OUR SOCIETY WILL ALWAYS NEED METALS": OCEANAGOLD'S RESPONSIBLE MINING CHAMPIONS TRANSPARENCY, SUSTAINABILITY

A strong commitment to transparency, values-based operations, and partnerships with leading organizations is pushing OceanaGold's global performance both as a leading gold producer and community collaborator.

OceanaGold CEO, Mick Wilkes, said it is the responsibility of all mining organisations to exceed community expectations and commit to practices that support employees, host and adjacent communities and the environment.

"At OceanaGold, we are committed to leaving a positive legacy every day. Responsible mining is fundamental to the way we do business, manage our impacts and, more broadly, contribute to society. This is true for all our operations – from New Zealand, to the United States to Nueva Vizcaya in the Philippines," Mr Wilkes said.

"It is this holistic approach that enables us to grow and optimise our operations – by having strong management systems in place that allow us to consider all aspects of our business in our decision-making processes – including economic effects and opportunities, health, safety, environment, people, host and adjacent communities, our investors, business partners and civil society," he said.

OceanaGold's Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Policy is at the forefront of responsible corporate governance, and making sure leaders, employees and contractors conduct themselves with



honesty and integrity in all their dealings and understand the consequences if they do not.

This is supported by a commitment to transparency, including publicly reporting all payments and contributions at an operation-by-operation level and around annual sustainability targets and achievements in the company's Sustainability Report.

"We want to lead from the front, and that's why we value our partnerships with leading global organisations such as Transparency International, the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), the United Nations Global Compact and the World Gold Council," Mr Wilkes said.

"Working with Transparency International and the EITI we ultimately have a role to play in ending the potential for an abuse of power, bribery or secret deals," he said.

"In addition, we are proud members of the UN Global Compact giving our full corporate commitment to operating

responsibly in alignment with its ten universal sustainability principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption, and to take actions that support society."

"Our society will always need metals, so as an industry we have a responsibility to always keep pushing the boundaries of how we operate to ensure more sustainable performance. Our membership of the World Gold Council puts us amongst some of the world's most forward-thinking gold mining companies, to ensure a sustainable and responsible gold mining industry."

"Earning the right to be here long into the future requires us to continue to enhance our responsible performance, work closely with communities, their governments and global organisations to ensure ongoing sustainable development. I'm very proud of the work OceanaGold is doing in this area."



ART ALL AROUND

**ONGOING: 'Gallery of the Sea'
VENUE: Manila Yacht Club,
Roxas Boulevard, Manila**

"Gallery of the Sea" gathers 25 different visual artists at the Manila Yacht Club in an effort to create environmental awareness—particularly toward the oceans—for every Filipino, and to collaborate in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations.

Behind this collective effort with the Manila Yacht Club are Earthsavers, along with several government agencies and benefactors. The sail paintings to be exhibited until August 31 are by the following artists: Nemi Miranda, Atoy Apostadero, Dolpee Alcantara, Aaron Villamayor Bautista, Keiye Miranda, Lito Balagtas, Bernardo Balagtas, Gem Yonzon Blanco, Jose Glenn P. Blanco, Joanne Angelique Venida Papa-Rebustillo, Augusto Ortega Santiago Jr., Ed Cabrera Castor, Jun Sergio Rocha, Carlos Cee Cadid, Bing Siochi, Liza Broce Oppus, Raks Molata, Naning Molata Gavin, Nik Masangcay, Renn Maglalang, Roland Santos, Andy Abu Urag, Egai Talusan Fernandez, Peter Ng, and Pete Velasquez.

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FIRST FLEET IN CALABARZON

FREE RIDE AS LAGUNA COOPERATIVE ROLLS OUT MODERN JEEPNEYS

SAN PEDRO CITY—A transport cooperative in Laguna province is giving commuters a free ride when it holds its dry run of its modern jeepney fleet on Tuesday.

Thirty units of the upgraded public utility vehicles (PUVs) will be plying the national road between the cities of San Pedro and Calamba, with a terminal in Sta. Rosa City, all in Laguna.

Donations, loans

The modern jeepneys, the first batch of modern PUVs in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) region, comply with the national government's PUV modernization program that sets new industry standards, specifically the use of the diesel-

powered Euro-4 3.0 engines.

Launched in 2017, the program, however, is met with criticisms from transport groups that will be affected by the phaseout of old jeepneys.

The government set a deadline of June 30, 2020, for all 170,000 jeepneys nationwide to comply with the modernization program.

In Laguna, Filomeno Camcaman, chair of Sta. Rosa City Unified Transport Cooperative, said his cooperative was able to acquire the modern PUVs through private donations and bank loan assistance.

He said each unit cost P2.2 million but was payable by the operator or driver in seven

years with minimal interest.

"Yes, it will have an effect on [drivers who still use old jeepneys], but what do we do? We cannot just turn our backs to the government's program," he said.

Reduce traffic, air pollution

Currently, there are 2,400 PUVs registered with the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board servicing the San Pedro to Calamba area.

Sta. Rosa City Mayor Arlene Arcillas, in a telephone interview, lauded the initiative of the cooperative to find means to upgrade their vehicles.

The 7-meter-long modern jeepney, with a seating capacity of 21 and space to accommodate

a couple more of standing passengers, can help reduce gas emission and make a dent on heavy traffic in the city, she said.

"[Modern jeepneys] are flat-nosed. The extra two meters occupied [by the front of the traditional jeeps] are also a big space you take off the road," Camcaman said.

He said each unit was also equipped with a global positioning system device, WiFi connection and is fully air-conditioned.

Minimum fare for the modern jeepneys is P11, or P2 higher than the prevailing rate. Camcaman said the modern jeepneys were designed with seats for persons with disability, pregnant women and seniors.

—MARICAR CINCO INQ



TEST RUN A fleet of 30 modern jeepneys will service passengers from San Pedro City to Calamba City in Laguna province starting this week. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Muntinlupa joins WWF One Planet City Challenge

MUNTINLUPA City qualifies for the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) One Planet City Challenge (OPCC). WWF Philippines Project Manager Imee Belen and ICLEI Southeast Asia Project Officer Ricardo Marfiga Jr. lauded the local government's efforts as they paid a courtesy visit to Mayor Jaime Fresnedi on July 19. OPCC aims to encourage cities around the world to reduce carbon development and promote renewable energy solutions and sustainable urban transport systems. Also shown in the photo is Muntinlupa Environmental Sanitation Center (ESC) Head Lorna Misa and ESC Consultant Danilo Diaz.





US military divers assist PH partners

US and Philippine service members, local government workers, and non-governmental organizations partnered to install artificial reefs at Barangay Hukay, Calatagan, Batangas on August 15.

The project, dubbed Operation Pamamalakaya, is a collaboration between the Philippine Air Force, DV Boer Farm, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, and Municipality of Calatagan local government and residents. The US military participated with six divers and five support crew members.

The launching event installed a total of 30 jackstone-type artificial reefs made from simple construction materials. These reefs will serve as shelter, food sources, and breeding areas for wildlife. Coral will eventually cover the sunken structure, revitalizing

marine life and improving fishing livelihoods in the coastal communities of Batangas.

"Artificial reef planting is a life-saving human endeavor. A small contribution to the underwater ecosystem but a great catalyst to the socio-economic development of the coastal communities," said Lt. Col. Engelberto Nioda Jr, Group Commander, 730th Combat Group, 710th Special Operations Wing, Philippine Air Force.

"This project was a fantastic opportunity for us to partner with our friends in the PAF and help preserve the Philippine environment for future generations," said Maj. Zach Hart, a participating diver.

The United States, as a long-standing friend, partner, and ally of the Philippines, continues to provide support to Filipino communities with marine conservation projects.



■ (Above and below) US and Philippine divers installed 30 jackstone-type artificial reefs near Barangay Hukay, Calatagan, Batangas.





Nonstop declogging spares QC from floods

By **CHITO CHAVEZ**

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte has ordered the continuous declogging of the city's canals, drainage system and other waterways to minimize flooding during rainy weather.

The directive came as heavy rains were forecast for Metro Manila in the coming days.

Karl Michael E. Marasigan, head of the Quezon City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, said the city was spared from widespread flooding that gripped many parts of Metro Manila recently because of the nonstop clearing operations.

"The round-the-clock de-clogging of canals ordered by Mayor Joy Belmonte to take advantage of the two-week monsoon break and dredging of key waterways traversing the city since the first week of the Belmonte administration facilitated the speedy flow of rainwater in our drainage system," Marasigan said.

Last Saturday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) Science Garden Synoptic Station recorded 25.6 mm of rain from 8 a.m. to 11a.m. or

an hourly rate of 8.5mm.

PAGASA also said that the concentration of Saturday's thunderstorm was over the southern part of Metro Manila with 75.6mm of rain recorded in Makati

City from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. with an hourly rate of 25.2mm, which was classified as intense.

Despite the heavy rains, there were no reports of massive flooding through-

out Saturday, according to the Quezon City Emergency Operations Center.

The city's Urban Search and Rescue Team which was placed on standby, also did not receive any distress calls.





Declogging spares Q.C. from floods

Makati hardest hit by heavy rains

By Alvin Murcia

Sewer and canal clean-up operations helped spare Quezon City from the floods that hit many areas of Metro Manila, including Makati City, on Saturday due to tropical storm "Ineng."

City disaster risk reduction head Karl Marasigan credited the dredging of key waterways ordered by Mayor Joy Belmonte for the "speedy flow of

rainwater in our drainage system."

He said they took advantage of the two-week monsoon break in cleaning up canals, creeks and other waterways.

Saturday's flood arose from the 25.6mm of heavy rain that poured from 8 to 11 a.m. or 8.5mm per hour, according to weather bureau PAGASA, citing data from its Science Garden synoptic station.

The rain concentration was over the southern part of Metro Manila with 75.6mm recorded in Makati City over the three-hour period, leading to flooded streets, especially in and around Barangay Palanan.

The hourly rate of rain in Makati City was at 25.2mm, classified as "intense."

Back in Quezon City, there were no reports of massive flooding throughout Saturday

despite the heavy rains, the Q.C. Emergency Operations Center said.

Belmonte takes advantage of two-week monsoon break to clear waterways.

The city's urban search and rescue team which was placed on standby also did not receive any distress call.

Belmonte tasked the City

Engineering Department, the Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department and the Parks Development and Administration Department to continue declogging, dredging and cleaning-up operations.

The city has formed Task Force 60 Days to undertake pro-active measures to "keep the city out of harm's way," Marasigan said.



PH-Style Decentralization,

By Benjamin R. Punongbayan

THE Local Government Code of 1991 decentralized local government units (LGUs) and, for this purpose, LGUs were given an annual allocation (allotment) of 40% of national tax collections (Internal Revenue Allotment or IRA). The IRA is in addition to the local taxes that the LGUs already impose and may impose in their respective jurisdictions. Now, after a long 28 years, this decentralization does not seem to have provided the improvements in the lives of our citizens that its proponents had argued as reason for its adoption.

The decentralization is a failure.

This failure is evident in the persistent use of the term "Imperial Manila" to describe the national government; by the LGUs' continuing mindset of looking at the Center for additional financial assistance for their infrastructure development responsibility; and by the continuing acceptance by the Center of such requests.

The failure is also evident in the current proposal of some groups to make the existing union of the Filipino people federal. Interestingly, a principal proponent of federalism is himself the creator of the 1991 deregulation code. Whatever one makes out of this trend of thinking, it is a clear tacit recognition by the author of deregulation that it has failed.

The failure is also evident in the generally sorry state of infrastructure in Philippine provinces, cities, and towns. Uncollected garbage still abounds because of inadequate dumpsites. During the rainy season, some school children cannot go to school because the shallow and narrow rivers they cross swell and there is not even a footbridge across the river that they can use. The poor use the river as a toilet, because there are no public toilets for their use. When the school year starts, there is usually a scramble for additional classrooms which, under the Code, the LGUs could provide. But they

generally don't and look to the national government to provide them.

The former agricultural service extension of the national government had been decentralized. Judging by the continuing poor performance of the agriculture sector, this decentralized important government service makes absolutely no difference in agricultural development.

Why is decentralization a failure? Is it because the amount of IRA is inadequate? Offhand, probably not, judging by the prevalence of lampposts along the town roads, some of them so elaborately designed that they look grotesque; as well as by the painting of trees along the roads with a uniform combination of bright colors.

More seriously, it appears that it is not a pressing issue among LGUs. Otherwise, the adequacy of the IRA would have been a perennial big issue that would constantly hog the headlines. Of course, several years ago an LGU raised the issue of the basis of calculating the IRA and that was decided by the Supreme Court last year in favor of the LGUs. This decision requires that the basis of calculating the IRA should include customs duties and not just the national taxes collected by the BIR, as done presently. But, prior to this decision, there had been no persistent clamor to increase the IRA.

What I thought is occurring is that LGUs look at the IRA as a fund they can use for whatever they deem necessary. When it becomes short for any development needs in their jurisdiction, they leave the projects to the next higher level of government to deal with, or ask that level of government for additional funding. They are not made to see that the IRA is the only additional money that they can have to carry out all their stated responsibilities. As a result, the LGU does not have any compulsion to use its own IRA effectively and efficiently. A good example of the consequences of this mindset are the additional classrooms I mentioned earlier. Other notable examples are the development of ports, bridges, drainage, sewerage, and dumpsites that would

serve local needs. LGUs tend to look at these not for them to develop and fund, but for the Center or somebody else to do.

To be fair, let us look at the quantum of the IRA. The 40% IRA is calculated based on national tax collections of three years ago. The allocation of the IRA among the LGUs is specifically provided at 23% for the provinces, 23% for the cities, 34% for the municipalities, and 20% for the *barangays*. These allocations are further divided among the peer units using prescribed bases.

In 2018, the total IRA was P522 billion, of which P281.3 billion (54%) was the combined IRA for municipalities and *barangays*. For better appreciation, let's bring these numbers down to the region level, say, Region VI (Western Visayas). This region's total IRA in 2018 was P41.8 billion. Bringing this down to the province level, the IRA for each province in that region ranged from P1.3 billion to P17 billion. The low end was for a small province. Let's focus on the high end. Of the P17 billion, P3 billion was for the province itself and P14 billion was for the cities, municipalities, and *barangays* in that province. It is not possible to bring the numbers down to a specific municipality and *barangay*, as such information is not publicly available. But, based on the numbers cited, it can be discerned and it is fair to say that the separate IRA of each province, city, municipality, and *barangay* is not a small amount of money and may meet their respective needs, especially considering that these are amounts they are receiving every year and receiving in increasing amounts in parallel with national economic growth. Moreover,

For 28 years to 2019, the cumulative power of these available IRA funds should have made a big difference in the development of the provinces, cities, and towns. But this supposed big difference does not show.



the IRA is on top of the taxes that provinces/cities/municipalities directly collect from their respective citizens. The combined amounts are certainly more than they need for operating expenses and, therefore, they have available funds for infrastructure and other capital spending.

LGUs spend their share of IRA money, which did not exist before 1991, at their own discretion. For 28 years to 2019, the cumulative power of these available funds should have made a big difference in the development of the provinces, cities, and towns. But this supposed big difference does not show. If LGUs around the country just focused on farm-to-market roads, they could have built a lot of them during the last 28 years. That, by itself, would have been a convincing exhibit of the success of decentralization. But the LGUs did not build many of those roads, because they were largely looking for somebody else to build them. So where did the money go?

I recognize that what is presented here is a top level evaluation of the outcome of decentralization. It will be more instructive if a thorough study of the effectiveness of the 1991 decentralization is undertaken. It is incumbent upon the national government to make or commission this study before it augments the IRA to implement the recent Supreme Court decision.

Decentralization is a good principle to adopt and implement as a public policy. However, it requires a good design. A good design requires a clear specification of the responsibilities of the people to whom the decentralized activities have been devolved and an inclusion of a sys-

tem of accountability for the use of the money that is given.

The Local Government Code is quite expansive in its enumeration of the responsibilities of the LGUs. In infrastructure alone, the responsibilities of each province include: "provincial roads and bridges; inter-municipal waterworks, drainage and sewerage, flood control, and irrigation systems...;" For a municipality: "municipal roads and bridges; school buildings... clinics, health centers...; communal irrigation...; fish ports... drainage and sewerage and flood control..." And, for a city, its responsibilities include all those listed for the municipality and the province and a few more.

Clearly, the responsibilities of LGUs cover a wide area and LGUs are given money to carry them out. Even if only half of each of those facilities listed above had been developed for the last 28 years, we would have much better provinces, cities, and municipalities to live in today.

But there is a lot of vagueness in the enumeration of these responsibilities and that led to poor performance.

The responsibilities of each government unit in a province for the infrastructure listed above, because of their nature, necessarily overlap. For roads and bridges alone, what is a provincial road or bridge for which the province is responsible? A city road or bridge for which the city is responsible? A municipal road or bridge for which a municipality is responsible? If there is a need for a bridge to cross a river in a town, who is responsible for building it? I guess the argument would be: would it connect to a mere municipal road; or will it eventually serve to connect to a provincial road or to a city road? If we throw in here the building of drainage and sewerage, flood control, and irrigation systems, it becomes much more complicated, because most of these facilities will necessarily cross a few towns and cities.

What makes the situation worse is the way the development of these infrastructure facilities is defined in terms of funding. To quote for a province: "Infra-



DepEd, DPWH, DILG hahamig sa ₱4.1T budget

Abot sa mahigit apat na trilyong pisong budget ang hinihingi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Kongreso para sa taong 2020 kung saan malaking bahagi nito ay ilalaan sa Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) at Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Ang P4.1 trilyong national budget sa 2020 ay mas mataas na 12% sa budget ngayong taon na P3.662 trilyon.

Sakop ng DepEd ang Commission on Higher Education (CHED), mga state university at college gayundin ang Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) na popondohan ng P673 bilyon o 16.4% ng 2020 budget.

Pangalawa sa may pinakamalaking budget ang DPWH na may alokasyon na P534.3 bilyon na sinundan ng DILG, P238 bilyon; Department of National Defense (DND), P189 bilyon; at Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), P158.6 bilyon.

Nasa ikaanim na puwesto ang Department of Transportation (DOTr) na may P147 bilyon habang ang Department of Health (DOH) at Department of Agriculture (DA) na may P92.2 bilyon at P56.8 bilyon, ayon sa pagkakasunod.

Ilan pa sa mga ahensya na may malaking budget ang Judiciary, P38.7 billion at Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) P26.4 bilyon). **(Prince Golez)**



'Gifts are never free...'

Gifts, according to French sociologist and anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), are never truly free. In 1925, Mauss, wrote his landmark "The Gift," an extended essay that mainly argued that gifts are never free; that objects exchanged in gift giving "are never completely separated from the men who exchange them."

In "The Gift," Mauss explained that gifts, whether material or in the form of services, had some "power" that obligated those who received them to reciprocate or give back. He notes: "...one must give back to another person what is really part and parcel of his nature and substance, because to accept something from somebody is to accept some part of his spiritual essence, of his soul."

This is the essence of Mauss' concept of a "gift economy"—where gifts are always given with an expectation of a return.

While Mauss theorized the concept of the gift economy almost a century ago, his main idea of gifts as never freely given, without expectation of a return, still holds true at present, especially in the Philippine bureaucracy.

Except that in the Philippine context, the return or reciprocation of a "gift" does not have the noble intention it was thought of, as it was true in the archaic societies that Mauss described in his essay.

Among the hottest discussions in the past few days were President Duterte's pronouncements that government officials can accept gifts from people who are "generous" to them. To this, his sycophantic subalterns chorused in assent: the law on prohibiting the acceptance of



KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

RUFA CAGOCO-GUIAM

gifts by government officials does not provide clear guidelines on what is "significant" and "insignificant" amounts or kinds of gifts.

In an interview on ANC, Commissioner Greco Belgica of the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission said P100,000 can be "insignificant" if given to a government official whose monthly salary is more than that amount. Ergo, the official can accept it without violating Republic Act No. 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

One commissioner of the Civil Service Commission disagreed with Belgica, saying that any amount or gifts given to government officials is not allowed, under specific provisions of RA 6713, like Section 3 (c) that defines a "gift" and (d) on "Receiving any gift."

Moreover, the code requires public officials to be at all times accountable for

their actions, discharge their duties with utmost responsibility, competence and loyalty, act with patriotism and justice, lead modest lives, and uphold public interest over personal interest.

The practice of giving "padulas" or grease money or goods to government officials seems to have been embedded in almost all line agencies, especially in regulatory bodies like those that require businesses to observe compliance to environmental laws.

Some officials of such agencies live luxurious lifestyles, having multiple houses or condominiums and owning a fleet of high-end vehicles. They are even known to go on family tours to choice vacation sites here and abroad courtesy of fishing companies. In return, the officials of the concerned regulatory agency grant the required environmental compliance certificates to the fishing companies.

In other words, it is largely through these gifts that are not freely given that we are encountering massive environmental problems.

So don't blame big business for the pollution they have caused to our seas and riverine systems. Such is just the consequence of the gifts they have given to corrupt public officials who have reciprocated big businesses' "generosity" to them.

All gifts have a price: they require payment, especially when given to government officials. And the price is quite heavy, and its effects are more damaging to the poor.

Comments to rcguiam@gmail.com



Planet Earth and humankind in peril

don't remember any other period in recent memory when actual events showing the impact of environmental destruction and climate change have been as alarming as this year. In the past, mere projections on the potential consequences of global warming made some of us anxious about the future. This time, very troubling real occurrences should arouse us to be very disturbed and to be really worried.

The world's largest rainforest—the Amazon in Brazil—is considered as our planet's lungs because it supplies 20 percent of oxygen on Earth. It's home to an immeasurable number of species of flora and fauna. It has been fire-resistant for much of its history because of its natural moisture and humidity, according to scientists. But last week, news organizations reported that the Amazon is being gravely devastated by fires at a record rate.

CNN reported the following: there have been 72,843 fires in Brazil this year, with more than half in the Amazon region; more than 1½ soccer fields of the Amazon rainforest are being destroyed every minute of every day; smoke and ash from the fires have plunged into darkness Brazil's largest city, São Paulo, which is more than 1,700 miles away, and; smoke covers almost half of Brazil, even reaching neighboring countries like Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay.

CNN also reported about Alaska: the water is so hot in Alaska, it's killing large numbers of salmon; salmon are dying before they have the chance to spawn, and; the heat decreases the amount of oxygen in the water, causing salmon to suffocate and die with healthy eggs in their bellies.



FLEA MARKET OF IDEAS

JOEL RUIZ BUTUYAN

Because of global warming, glaciers in Greenland, the Himalayas and Antarctica, and permafrost in Siberia, are melting at very alarming rates.

Forbes magazine wrote this month about Greenland: the glacier-covered island lost 12.5 billion tons of ice in just one particularly hot day this August; temperatures at the highest point of Greenland went above freezing point, causing a massive melting of its ice sheet, and; the ice sheet that covers Greenland contains enough ice that, if it melts, could raise sea level across the globe by more than 20 feet.

The National Geographic featured an article about Antarctica: the glaciers in Antarctica are crumbling and melting; in the past decades, some glaciers in Antarctica have been retreating shockingly quickly, with three glaciers losing about 100 billion tons of ice each year, and; warm water melts away the ice.

The New York Times published an article about the Himalayas: climate change is "eating" the glaciers, posing a grave threat

to hundreds of millions of people who live downstream; Himalayan glaciers have lost a foot and a half of ice every year since 2000, and; in recent years, the glaciers have lost about 8 billion tons of water a year, and scientists point to rising temperatures as the biggest culprit.

The Himalayan glaciers feed rivers and lakes of so many countries in the Asian continent, including the two most populous countries of the world, India and China. Their loss would spell massive drought in agricultural lands, even in countries like Thailand and Vietnam where the Philippines obtains most of its rice imports.

The New York Times wrote this month about Siberia and Russia: in Siberia, the permafrost—permanently frozen ground—is thawing, causing floods, disrupting animal migration patterns, destroying people's livelihood, wrecking houses and roads, and; in Russia, permafrost covers two-thirds of the country at depths ranging up to almost a mile.

US Sen. Bernie Sanders had sounded the biggest alarm in all of human history because of the threat to the very existence of humanity. Sanders declared that America has to go to war against climate change, and the response needed in this war should parallel the overnight and nationwide transformation that took place in his country after the Pearl Harbor attack in World War II.

The whole world should listen and countries should respond to the clarion call. It's a prescription urgently needed for the survival of humanity.

Comments to fleamarketofideas@gmail.com

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The Manila Times



G7 to help nations hit by Amazon fires

BIARRITZ, France: World leaders at the G7 summit have agreed to help the countries affected by the huge wildfires ravaging the Amazon rainforest as soon as possible, French President Emmanuel Macron said Sunday.

those countries, which have been hit by the fires as fast as possible," he told journalists at the summit in the southwestern French resort of Biarritz. Ahead of the gathering, Macron called on world leaders to hold urgent talks on the wildfires ripping

through the world's largest rainforest, pledging "concrete measures" to tackle it. Although about 60 percent of the Amazon is in Brazil, the vast forest also

POWERFUL CIRCLE
(From left) European Council President Donald Tusk, Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, US President Donald Trump, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, France's President Emmanuel Macron and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel attend a working session on 'International Economy and Trade, and International Security Agenda' in Biarritz, southwest France on the second day of the annual G7 Summit. AFP PHOTO

AMAZON FROM A1

G7 to help nations

takes in parts of eight other countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

"This morning, Colombia called on the international community [to help], so we must help out," he said.

"Our teams are making contact with all the Amazon countries so we can finalize some very concrete commitments involving technical resources and funding," the French President added.

Macron's bid to put the Amazon crisis high on the agenda at the G7 angered Brazil's far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro, who lashed out over what he sees as outside interference, denouncing the French leader's "colonialist mentality."

Pope concerned

Pope Francis on Sunday also voiced concern for the Amazon rainforest, a "vital" lung for the planet, as the worst blazes in years have sparked a global outcry.

vast fires that have developed in the Amazon," the pope told the faithful at the Vatican.

"That forest lung is vital for our planet."

He urged the world's 1.3 billion Catholics to pray for the fires to be extinguished as quickly as possible.

Official figures show 78,383 forest fires have been recorded in Brazil this year, the highest number of any year since 2013.

The Argentine pope, who will gather bishops for a conference on the Amazon in October, met Brazilian indigenous leader Raoni in 2013 when he toured Europe, warning of the dangers of deforestation.

The pope denounced the exploitation of the Amazon by "huge international economic interests" in a 2015 encyclical.

In January 2018 he visited Puerto Maldonado village in the Amazonian jungle of southeastern Peru, where thousands of tribespeople had gathered, including from neighboring Brazil and Bolivia. AFP





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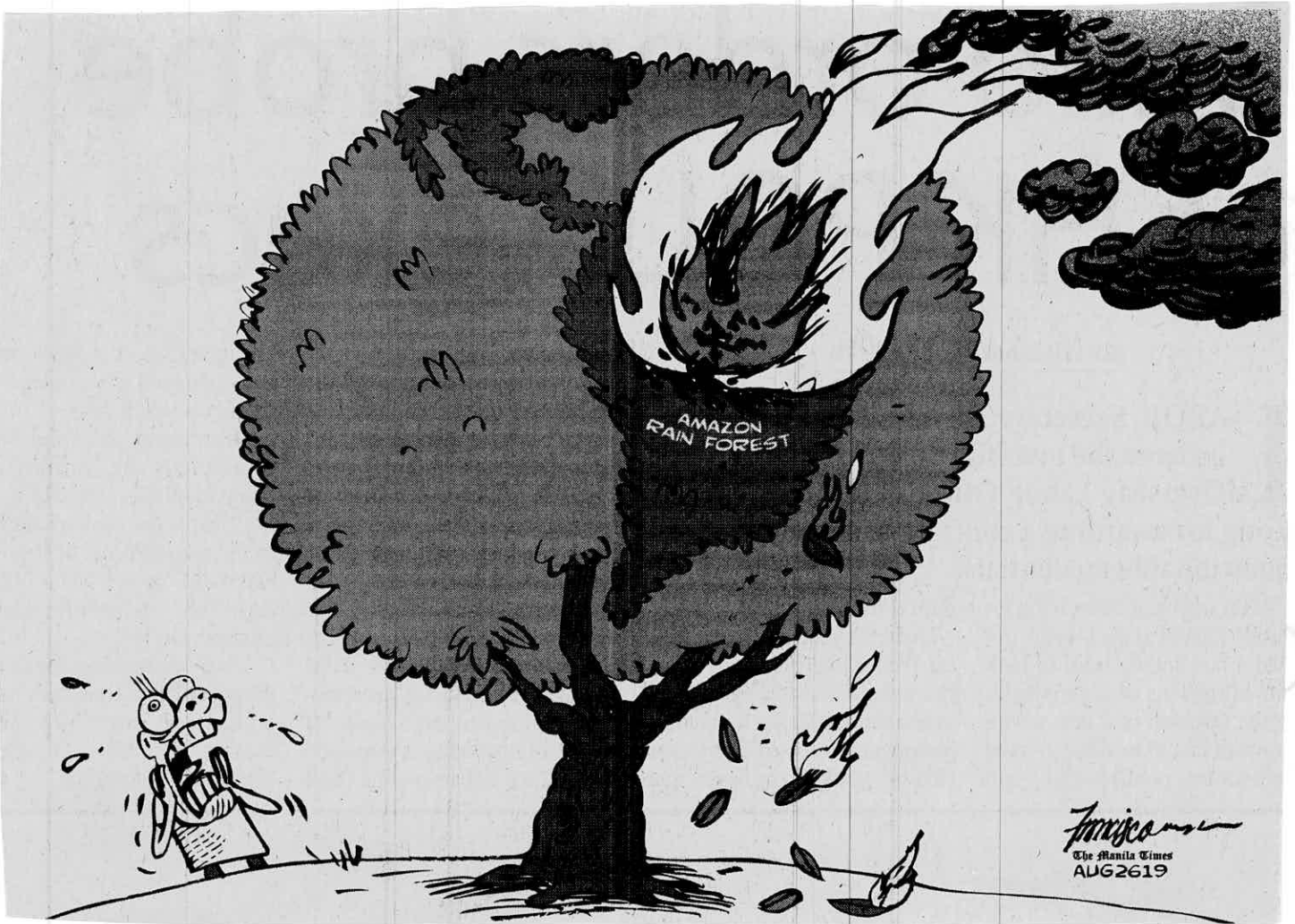
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AsPac running out of capacity to respond to natural disasters

By CZERIZA VALENCIA

Countries in the Asia Pacific region may be straining their capacity to cope with the ill-effects of natural disasters to their economies, according to a new report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

According to the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019, the growing disaster risks in the region may be exceeding its capacity to respond as resulting economic losses are set to quadruple.

The report showed that recent disasters that hit the region – especially those triggered by climate change and environmental degradation – have deviated from usual tracks and are growing in intensity, frequency and complexity.

“It is now more difficult to determine which areas should

prepare for what kind of disaster,” the report said.

UNESCAP estimates the annual economic loss for Asia and the Pacific at \$675 billion, or around 2.4 percent of the region’s economic output, of which \$405 billion or 60 percent are drought-related agricultural losses. As such, the impact of this is seen more on the rural poor.

The report said countries across the region have committed to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, but may miss out on many of the SDG targets if their people are not protected from disasters that threaten to reverse hard-won development gains.

This means not just building resilience in the priority zones, but doing so across the entire region – reaching the most marginal and vulnerable communities.

The report identifies four distinct hotspots in the region

with critical socioeconomic vulnerabilities. They include the transboundary river basins of South and South-East Asia; the Pacific Ring of Fire in South-East Asia and East and North-East Asia; sand and dust storm corridors in East and North-East Asia, South and South-West Asia and Central Asia; and climate-related hazards in the Pacific Small Island Developing States.

In the Philippines, it is estimated that 75.8 percent of the population is found to be living in high-multi-hazard risk areas.

Even the high-income population in the country is hardly spared from environmental hazards as the report shows that there is a near 40 percent probability that the wealthiest 20 percent of the population resides in high-multi-hazard risk areas.

As such, disasters can easily undo their economic gains.

For the agricultural poor,

there is around 20 percent probability that they are living in high risk areas.

The report recommends that social policies and disaster resilience should no longer be treated as separate policy domains.

Policymakers are also urged to improve the quality of investments and to make these more inclusive, making sure vulnerable groups are not excluded from the benefits of investments.

It likewise urges the use of emerging technologies such as big data and digital identities to ensure inclusion of vulnerable groups in policy interventions.

The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report is a bi-annual flagship publication of ESCAP which aims to assist policymakers, in both public and private sectors, to better understand disaster risk and resilience and take opportunities for action.



FROM TUSKS TO TAILS

Nations eye trade in endangered species

GENEVA—From guitars to traditional medicines and from tusk to tail, mankind's exploitation of the planet's fauna and flora is putting some of them at risk of extinction. Representatives of some 180 nations are meeting in Geneva to agree on protections for vulnerable species, taking up issues—including the trade in ivory and the demand for shark fin soup.



A WORKER collects pieces of shark fins dried on the rooftop of a factory building in Hong Kong in this January 3, 2013, photo. AP/KIN CHEUNG



The World Wildlife Conference on trade in endangered species, known as CITES, which takes place every three years, aims to make sure that global trade in specimens of wild animals and plants doesn't jeopardize their survival.

The conference opened on August 18 and runs through August 28, with key decisions expected to be finalized in the last two days. It had originally been due to take place in Colombo in May and June, but was moved to Geneva after a series of terror attacks in the Sri Lankan capital.

Three months ago, the first comprehensive UN report on biodiversity warned that extinction is looming for over 1 million species of plants and animals. There are growing concerns that policy-makers aren't acting quickly enough to stop it.

"Business as usual is no longer an option.... The rate of wildlife extinction is accelerating," said CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero in her opening remarks to the conference.

"The assessment confirms that nature's dangerous decline is unprecedented," Higuero said.

The meeting also comes just days after the Trump administration announced plans to water down the US Endangered Species Act—a message that could echo among attendees at the CITES conference, even if the US move is more about domestic policy than international trade.

Sustainable management

ALAIN BERSSET, head of the home affairs department of host Switzerland, noted that sustainable management of threatened species "of course requires taking into account the interests and the needs of the countries where these species live."

CITES bans trade in some products entirely, while permitting international trade in other species—provided it doesn't hurt their numbers in the wild.

Demand is diverse for animal and plant products, prized for their medicinal properties or as pets, culinary delicacies, and products for knitwear and handbag—among many other uses.

Customs officials around the world know to be on the lookout for the CITES logo on shipments of plants and animals across borders: It amounts to a highly respected seal of approval that trade in such species is legitimate.

The meeting's agenda contains 56 proposals to change—mostly strengthen—the level of protection among vulnerable or endangered species.

Downgrade protections?

BUT some argue that protections should be downgraded because the relevant populations have stabilized or even increased. Officials say the decisions are to be based on science, not political or other considerations.

"The new wildlife trade rules...cover an array of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, trees and other plants. Twenty listing proposals are inspired by concern over the growing appetite of the exotic pet trade for charismatic amphibians and reptiles," CITES says.

Ivory

AFRICA is facing an internal debate about elephants and ivory.

Zambia—which argues its population of wild African elephants is large and stable, at about 27,000—wants to "downlist" that population to allow for ivory stockpile sales and exports of hunting trophies, hides and leathers.

A few other countries in southern Africa want another rule on elephants eased. But 10 other countries—all but one African—want total protection for elephants from any international ivory trade.

Israel is even proposing tougher regulations on the legal trade of mammoth ivory, hoping to under-

cut illegal traffickers of elephant tusk who sneakily try to pass it off as "ice ivory"—ivory that comes from mammoth tusks.

Elephant and mammoth tusks can be almost indistinguishable to the untrained eye, and the mammoth ivory trade has become a booming business. Conference attendees will have to determine whether products from a long-extinct species can or should be covered by CITES.

Advocacy group Avaaz says one key question is whether Japan—home to the world's largest legal ivory market—will join other countries committed to closing their ivory trade.

"Japan's ivory market is fueling the international illegal ivory trade," Avaaz campaigner Andy Legon said in an e-mail. "And with elephants facing extinction, China, the US, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore and others have recently committed to closing their ivory markets."

Go Tsurumi, chairman of the Japan Federation of Ivory Arts and Crafts Association, insisted some people who live alongside elephants in Africa would be "very disappointed" if domestic demand for ivory is cut off in places like Japan.

"The many people who work in the ivory business will no longer be able to continue with their work in that business—and that is a serious problem," he said.

Flora issues

FLORA, arguably a less glamorous subject than animal life, also gets spots on the agenda.

One proposal, for example, would exempt musical instruments from trade restrictions on a type of rosewood that's prized by guitar makers.



Shark fins

ALSO on the agenda are sharks. Some researchers say commercial demand for shark fins—largely driven by the Chinese appetite for shark fin soup—is decimating populations.

Sharks are getting some support in high places, including from retired basketball all-star Yao Ming, who led China's Olympic team three times.

Yao became a WildAid ambassador in 2006 when he signed a pledge to give up shark fin soup and has since appeared in numerous ads calling for diners to skip the luxury soup to save sharks.

WildAid, an environmental group, also says Yao was instrumental in bringing about China's ivory ban two years ago.

Luke Warwick of the Wildlife Conservation Society said dried shark fin can command up to \$1,000 per kilogram, and listing more shark species to the CITES list would be just one of several measures needed to help vulnerable populations of the predators of the deep.

"You've got this huge, unsustainable global trade in shark fin and huge parts of it, 80 percent, are not regulated, with millions of animals dying," he told a Geneva news conference this week. "We're watching them disappear before our eyes."

Dr. Abdulla Naseer, the Maldives's environment minister, said his island nation supports three proposals to protect 18 species of sharks and rays, namely the mako shark, white-spotted wedgfish and giant guitarfish.

"We would be ensuring future trade is sustainable...before it's too late," he said. "We want to see the oceans protected for future generations." AP



TITLE:

WALANG sinomang gustong magkasakit.

Pero nandiyan na ang dengue at leptospirosis na sakit kaya dapat harapin ng lahat ang mga ito.

Kung hanggang saan ang ating kakayanan para malabanan ang mga sakit na ito, dagdagan na lang natin ng mga dasal.

Heto ang masasakit na pangyayari, mga bro.

Sa dengue, malapit nang mag-200,000 ang nagkakasakit at may 722 nang patay samantalang nasa 1,000 na ang may leptospirosis at nasa 113 na ang patay.

Ito'y mula sa Enero hanggang Agosto 20, 2019.

FIRST AID

Maraming kaso ang naitatala na sinusubukan ng mga pamilya na alamin ang uri ng sakit na dumadapo sa miyembro nila.

Nangangahulugan na kahit papaano, kasunod nito ang mga aksyon nila laban sa sakit.

'Yung iba, lalo na sa parte ng mga mahihirap, inuuna nilang gamutin muna ang kanilang maysakit.

Pinaiinom o tinatapan ang mga ito ng mga gamot na galing sa botika o sa mga paligid na herbal medicine.

Ang iba, pumupunta sa mga magtatawas para alamin ang mga sakit.

lisa talaga ang dahilan: gusto nilang umiwas sa malaking gastos sa pagpapadoktor at pagpapaospital.

Pero kung sumablay ang lahat, saka lang sila tatakbo sa doktor o ospital.

'Yun bang === medyo hindi na maganda ang kalagayan ng mga pasyente na nasa bingit na ng kamatayan.

MAGANDA NAMAN

Maganda naman ang naiisip ng mga miyembro ng pamilya na magfirst aid muna.

Nangangahulugan na kahit papaano, may epekto ang mga edukasyong pangkalusugan na kampanya ng pamahalaan laban sa nasabing mga sakit.

Bukod pa rito ang namana nilang mga kaalaman at kalutasan sa sakit mula sa mga matatanda.

Ang pinag-uusapan kasi sa una ay mga sin-



NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

GIYERA SA DENGUE AT LEPTOSPIROSIS

tomas ng sakit at nakaabot ito sa kaalaman ng marami sa mga magkakapitbahay at magkakabarangay.

Halimbawa, pareho ang dengue at leptospirosis na lumilikha ng lagnat, sakit sa ulo, panghina ng katawan, panakit ng kalamnan, pagkakaroon ng butlig, pag-susuka at iba pa.

Pareho rin ang dengue at leptospirosis na naglalabas ng dugo sa ilong, gums, bunganga, dumi, ihi at iba pa.

Ang ilang pagkakaiba ay walang paninilaw sa may dengue at karaniwang mas matagal na gamutin ang may leptospirosis.

MAGANDA PA

Dahil sa takot na matatay at magkasakit, halos lahat ay nag-iingat.

Halos lahat din ay gustong tumulong laban sa mga sakit.

Halimbawa sa dengue, kung may nanawagan sa barangay para sa paglilinis, gusto ng marami ang sumasali sa iba't ibang paraan.

May mga nakikilinis sa kapaligiran, lalo na sa mga posibleng pamugaran at pangingitluga ng lamok na may dengue.

'Yung iba na hindi nakasali, nagpapamiryenda, nagbibigay ng materyales gaya ng mga mahahabang damit sa mga bata at iba pa.

Sa leptospirosis, may mga nag-aalok ng libreng sakay o konting pabuya sa pagtawid sa may tubig ng mga may sugat sa paa dahil sa baha naman nakukuha ang sakit mula sa ihi ng daga at iba pang mga hayop.

'Yung iba, nagpapahuli ng daga kapalit ng isang kilong bigas at iba pa.

PROBLEMA SA DOKTOR

Ang naiiwan talaga na problema ay sa parte ng mga doktor.

Karaniwang sinasabi ng mga parmasya sa mga ospital, lalo na ang mga pampubliko, na ubos na ang kanilang mga gamot laban sa dalawang sakit.

At kung meron mang mga gamot, anak ng tok-

wa, para lang sa mga kamag-anak ng mga doctor, nurse at pharmacist.

Doon sa labas o kooperatiba ng mga ospital pinabibili ang mga pasyente.

At magtataka kang ayaw bitiwan ng mga parmasya at kooperatiba na isauli sa pasyente ang mga reseta.

Naroon kasi ang pirma ng mga doktor na nagkakaroon ng mga komisyon sa bentahan ng mga gamot at iba pang mga kailangan.

Nagmamahal ang mga gamot at gamit laban sa sakit dahil sa pambababoy ng mga doctor sa mga pasyente.

Meron pa ngang doctor na ayaw gamitin ang mga gamot na binili sa ibang parmasya o kooperatiba kahit na pareho ang kanilang mga inireseta.

Ganyan katindi ang mga anomalya, partikular sa Dengvaxia, P600 lang ang presyo ng isang vial at good for 3 turukan.

Pero sa mga pribadong doctor, nasa P4,000-P6,000 bawat turok at maaaring ito ang isang malaking dahilan kung bakit atat na atat ang mga doctor na ibalik ang Dengvaxia sa Pinas.

KAYANG LABANAN

Kaya nating labanan ang mga sakit, kahit ang kamatayan mula rito, basta magtulung-tulong tayong labanan ang pagkalat ng sakit at para sa pagpapagamot ng maysakit.

Huwag nating ipagkait ang anomang matutulong natin sa mga natatamaan ng sakit.

Kung may mga nag-sasamantalang mga doctor at ospital, ilabas natin para maimbestigahan at mapagtuunan ng pansin ng pamahalaang Duterte.

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



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
DENR-CENRO XI-4A, Capitol Compound, Matli, Digos City
Tel Nos. (082) 553-8756

LEASE OF PUBLIC LANDS

Notice is hereby given that Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, Digos City, will accept oral or written bids not later than ten (10:00) o'clock a.m. on October 7, 2019, for the lease for **Industrial** purposes of the tract of land herein below described:

Location : Coronon, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur
Description : FII-112412-000012-D
Area : 4,500 square meters
Appraised land : Php 950.00 per square meter or a total appraised value of the land at Php 4,275,000.00
Value of Proposed Improvements : Php 1,739,770.00
Applied for by : JONATHAN M. SY

The succesful bidder if other than the applicant must reimburse the latter of the expenses for the publication of the notice of lease and the survey of the land.

The right to lease the land will be awarded to the person offering the highest annual rental, which shall not be less than three per centum (3%) of the value of the land plus one per centum (1%) of the value of the proposed/existing improvements. In order that a person may be entitled to participate in the bidding, he must be a qualified public land applicant, and must, before the commencement of the same, make a deposit equivalent to at least three (3) months rental. Only deposit in cash, money order, treasury warrant, certified checks, cashier's check or manager's check can be accepted. A person bidding in representation of another may do so under a duly executed power of attorney. During the bidding, the bidder has to make an additional deposit everytime his bid is raised, to complete the three (3) month's rental, otherwise, such bid as raised shall not be accepted. The right is reserved to reject any or all bids.

Digos City, Davao del Sur, Philippines, August 16, 2019.

RUEL D. COLONG
CENR Officer