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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



MARTES 18 DISYEMBRE 2018 REMATE 9

SENADO INAPRUBAHAN ANG P24.17B BUDGET NG DENR

NAGPASALAMAT si Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu sa pag-apruba ng Senado sa budget ng departamentong kanyatig pinamumunuan para sa taong 2019.

Ayon kay Cimatu, dahil sa pag-apruba ng Senado sa budget ng DENR para sa 2019 na nagkakahalagang P24.17 billion ay maisasagawa na ng naturang ahensiya ang mga priority program nito para pangalagaan ang kalikasan at mga likas na yaman ng bansa.

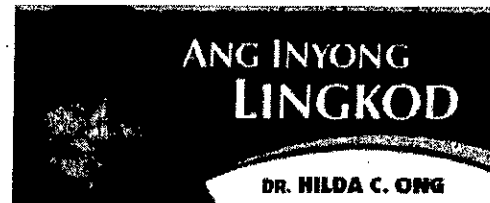
"We can finalize and carry out our 2019 plans, policies and activities to realize our mandate of improving the lives of Filipinos, while protecting and conserving our

rich biodiversity for present and future generations," dagdag pa ni Cimatu kasabay ng pagpapasalamat nito sa mga mambabatas.

Noong Lunes nang aprubahan ng Senado ang budget ng DENR matapos ang dalawang oras na interpelasyon kung saan ay pinangunahan ni Senador Cynthia Villar ang pagdepensa sa ahensiya habang sina Senators Manny Pacquiao, Franklin Drilon, Risa Hontiveros at Richard Gordon ang mga naglitanong.

Nilinaw ng mga senador sa kanilang interpelasyon ang mga prayoridad na lugar at species ng DENR sa ilalim ng Enhanced National Greening Program (eNGP), implementasyon ng solid waste management at clean water laws kaugnay sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay, kalagayan ng open pit mining at ang rehabilitasyon ng Boracay.

Pinuri rin ng mga senador si Cimatu dahil sa ipinakitang "political will" sa pansamantalang pagpapasa-



ra at pagsasaayos ng Boracay at ang mga planong rehabilitasyon sa iba pang ecotourism sites sa bansa.

Para sa taong 2019, nakalaan ang P5.072 billion o 21% ng kabuuang budget ng DENR para sa forest and watershed management sa pamamagitan ng eNGP habang P890 million naman ang inilaan para palakasin ang kampanya para sa forest protection at paglaban sa illegal logging.

Nakalaan naman ang P732 million o mahigit 3% budget ng ahensiya para sa mga programa sa protected area development at wildlife protection and conservation.

Kabilang naman sa mga prayoridad na proyekto ay ang "improvement of land administration and management na may budget na P400 million, scaling up of coastal and marine ecosystems na may P267.69 million budget at P80 million naman para sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay.

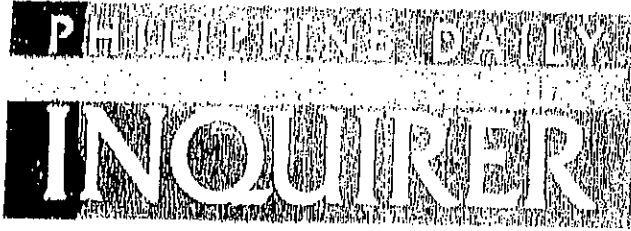
Makatatanggap naman ang Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ng P969.8 million para sa implementasyon ng mga programa tungkol sa clean air, clean water at solid waste management.

Aabot naman sa P469.07 million ang budget ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) para sa geohazard, ground water assessment at responsible mining programs.

Napag-alaman na mas mababa ng 3% ang proposed budget ng DENR para sa 2019 kumpara sa P24.91 billion budget ng ahensiya sa General Appropriations Act for 2018.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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MAGNIFIED CESSPOOL

**MANILA BAY
 REHAB SET IN
 JANUARY—CIMATU**

By Vince F. Nonato
 @VinceNonatoINQ

After Boracay Island, it's the turn of Manila Bay.

"I am determined to start the rehabilitation of Manila Bay immediately, possibly to start [in the] second week of January," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said on Monday during his department's last flag ceremony for the year.

He added that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) would temporarily be reorganized, for the purpose of undertaking rehabilitation efforts, in order to "reduce the coliform to a level where we can swim again."

He noted that the current levels of coliform bacteria of 330 million mpn/100 ml (most probable number per 100 milliliters) made Manila Bay a "magnified cesspool."

Cimatu said he would also coordinate with DENR officials in cities surrounding the bay, including local government units concerned.

The Supreme Court tasked some government agencies, including the DENR, to clean up the bay in a landmark 2008 decision that granted the remedy of a continuing mandamus.

INQ

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Welcome plan to clean up Manila Bay

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WHEN Boracay was closed down because, in the words of President Duterte, its surrounding waters had become a cesspool, the fecal coliform bacterial level had reached 100 MPN (Most Probable Number) per 100 milliliters of water, Secretary Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said last week.

The coliform level in Manila Bay's waters have already reached 350 MPN per 100 milliliters, Secretary Cimatu said as he announced that the DENR – finally – is acting on a problem that became the subject of a Supreme Court decision as early as 10 years ago.

The DENR, he said, is setting up four Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENROs) around the coast of Manila Bay – in Manila, in Navotas-Malabon, in Pasay-Parañaque, and in Las Pinas – to monitor the bay cleanup which is due to begin next year. These will cover the most polluted parts of the bay, the areas closest to the cities of Metro Manila.

Less polluted are the shores of the bay in Bataan, Pampanga, and Bulacan in the north and in Cavite in the south. As the cleanup progresses, we expect the monitoring of the waters will include these other areas.

Boracay was closed down because its waters had become so polluted by hotels, restaurants, and other enterprises catering to the millions of tourist visitors. It was beginning to show an ugly face of the Philippines to foreign visitors and President Duterte acted decisively in closing it down for six months.

The problem of pollution in Manila Bay was actually known years earlier, in 2008, when the Supreme Court, acting on the complaint of a citizens group, ordered 13 government agencies led by the DENR to “to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay, restore and maintain its waters to make them fit for swimming, skindiving, and other forms of contact recreation.”

Nothing substantial was done in the ten years since that Supreme Court order. There are local government orders banning swimming in the polluted waters of the bay, while periodic cleanup drives are held by various groups along the coast to remove truckloads of plastics and other garbage coming from the towns surrounding the bay.

It is only now that the DENR has acted, with Secretary Cimatu's announcement that it will fulfill its part under the 2008 Supreme Court order to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay. But the DENR is only one of the 13 government agencies ordered by the Supreme Court to act on the problem.

The pollution in Manila Bay comes mostly from the sewage flowing down the streams into the Pasig River and other major channels draining Metro Manila and surrounding provinces. The DENR's four new community centers will monitor the fecal coliform levels starting next year but we do not see these pollution levels going down unless that sewage flowing into the bay is stopped by the local governments and the millions of households without proper waste treatment facilities in Metro Manila.

Still, the DENR plan is a beginning and is most welcome.



Group mocks DENR chief's plan to rehab Manila Bay

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonlmayuga

ENVIRONMENTAL groups belonging to the Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE) laughed off on Monday Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu's plan to implement a Boracay-like rehabilitation plan for Manila Bay.

In rejecting what it describes as an "all-out delusion" of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) chief in doing a Boracay in Manila Bay, Kalikasan-PNE said the government's past efforts to rehabilitate Boracay "cannot even be considered a success," considering the failure to fully enforce environmental laws among tourism-related business establishments, and the massive loss of jobs and livelihood.

"In the first place, only less than 10 percent of establishments were environmentally compliant after six full months of closure, and at least 35,000 disrupted jobs and livelihoods," Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan-PNE told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

Dulce was reacting to the DENR chief's statement as the agency mandated to manage the country's environment and natural resources gears up to embark on an ambitious campaign to restore Manila Bay's water back to its pristine state.

Cimatu is banking on the support and cooperation of various stakeholders, particularly local government units (LGUs) around the Manila Bay area. He vowed to exercise political will, which, Cimatu said, he demonstrated during the six-month closure and rehabilitation of Boracay Island, in Malay, Aklan.

Dulce said Cimatu's "final solution" is off-target by zeroing in on the poor again with his promise of demolishing the homes of 300,000 mostly marginalized residents across the coast.

He cited a 2010 World Bank study which indicates that lower and lower middle income level groups generate 0.60 to 0.79 kilograms of solid waste per day per head on average, compared to 2.1 kg of solid waste per day per person among high income level groups.

Moreover, the leader of the environmental advocacy group said the Boracay lockdown even facilitated the further privatization of Boracay's wetland ecosystems, public utilities and infrastructure.

"This impending Manila Bay crackdown may be the same modus, and will, in fact, feed into the Duterte government's plan to destroy and convert more than 30,000 hectares of the bay's coastal ecosystems into reclamation and other big business developments," he warned.

Last week the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas criticized the government's plan to relocate thousands of fishermen along Manila Bay. The plan, Pamalakaya said, in effect, blamed poor residents for the water pollution, while allegedly turning a blind eye to the chemical and toxic wastes being discharged by industrial and commercial structures on a regular basis, as well as other government projects that are destructive to marine ecosystem.

The relocation order of Cimatu is a prelude to reclamation projects pending in Manila Bay, Fernando Hicap, national chairman of Pamalakaya said.

There are 43 reclamation projects covering 32,429.56 hectares of waters lined up under President Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" (BBB) program, he said.

"Thousands of hectares of mangrove forests and coral reefs were destroyed before to pave way for commercial business districts and establishments. From decades ago until 1995, mangrove areas in Manila Bay used to cover 54,000 hectares but they have significantly shrunk to 2,000 hectares and at present, only less-than-a-500-hectare is left. This systematic destruction of mangroves not only affects the habitat of fish and other marine species but also the livelihood of small fishers who now suffer from the trend of fish-catch depletion; from 10 to 15 kilos down to 2 to 5 kilos of average catch per day," Hicap lamented.

Pamalakaya said Cimatu should refrain from his subjective decisions that put the socioeconomic rights of small fishermen at stake.

"Cimatu should not use the issue of pollution as an excuse to demolish fishing communities in Manila Bay when in the first place, it is the government's incompetence and sell-out to corporate plunderers that put our fishing waters in a dying stage. We reiterate our call to genuinely rehabilitate Manila Bay in a form of mangroves restoration and rejecting all destructive projects such as land reclamation," Hicap said.



EDITORIAL

**Welcome plan
to clean up Manila Bay**

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Boracay water rates to increase in 2019

BY JORDEENE B. LAGARE

CONSUMERS in Boracay face an 18-percent increase in water rates in January, as Boracay Island Water Co. has been allowed to adjust its rates next year.

In a disclosure on Monday, Manila Water said the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) gave its subsidiary Boracay Water the "go signal" to implement the upward adjustment in its rates.

TIEZA, in its resolution, stated that it approved an 18.08-percent hike in Boracay Water's basic water and sewer charge, representing

the third tranche of adjustments approved during last year's rate rebasing exercise and the corresponding inflation rate.

It also approved another 3-percent increase in the basic water and sewer charge levied by the island's water provider due to the foreign currency differential adjustment.

Under Residential A category, typical households that consume

10 cubic meters (cu.m.) or less will be paying P557.82 per connection from the previous rate of P472.41.

Households that consume 11 to 20 cu.m. will see their water rates increase to P105.99 per cu.m. from P89.76 per cu.m. Those with consumption of 11 to 20 cu.m. will notice rates climb to P156.18 per cu.m. from P132.27 per cu.m.

For consumers under Residential B bracket, water rates of customers with 10 cu.m. consumption or less will go up to P313.48 per connection, from P313.48 per connection.

Consumers under the Commercial A classification with 10 cu.m. consumption or less will pay up to

P1,394.51 per connection; for 11 to 50 cu.m. consumption, an increase of P167.33 per cu.m.; for 51 to 100 cu.m. consumption, P195.25 per cu.m.; and for over 100 cu.m. consumption, P223.10 per cu.m.

For Commercial B customers, those who consume 10 cu.m. or less will see rates rise to P836.71 per connection; for consumption of 11 to 50 cu.m., an increase of P153.39 per cu.m.; for 51 to 100 cu.m. consumption, P181.28 per cu.m.; and consumption of more than 100 cu.m., P209.18 per cu.m.

Boracay Water is a unit of Manila Water Philippine Ventures, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Manila Water.

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Rehab na tulad ng sa Boracay, target sa Manila Bay

PLANO ng gobyerno na isailalim sa rehabilitasyon na tulad ng sa Boracay ang Manila Bay.

Sa isang pahayag nitong Linggo, sinabi ni Environment and Natural Resources Sec. Roy Cimatu na inihahanda na nila ang gagawing istratchiya para ibaba ang coliform concentration sa Manila Bay sa 'safe level'.

Umaabot sa higit 330 million most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliters ang coliform level sa Manila Bay na lubhang mataas sa safe level na 100 MPN per 100ml.

Ito anya ay upang ma-enjoy ng mga residente na malapit sa katubigan ang marine resources ng dagat nang hindi natatakot na magkasakit.

Nagbabala ang DENR na ipasasara ang mga establisyimento malapit sa Manila Bay na hindi sumusunod sa environmental laws.

Giit pa ni Cimatu, magpapakita ang gobyerno ng 'political will' na kahalintulad ng sa rehabilitasyon ng Boracay.

Nanawagan din ang opisyal sa mga local government units na nakakasakop sa Manila Bay na palawigin ang mga cleanup efforts dahil ang mga mamamayan naman nito ang makikinabang kapag naging matagumpay ang rehabilitasyon.

Ang Manila Bay ay may lawak na abot mula Metro Manila hanggang Central Luzon at CALABARZON.



EDITORIAL

Isang napakagandang plano na linisin ang Manila Bay

NANG ipasara ang Boracay dahil, ayon sa paglalarawan dito ni Pangulong Duterte, maitutulad na sa imburnal arig tubig sa isla, ay umabot na sa 100 MPN (Most Probable Number) per 100 milliliters ng tubig ang fecal coliform bacterial level nito, sinabi noong nakaraang linggo ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Ang antas ng coliform sa tubig ng Manila Bay ay umabot na sa 350 MPN per 100 milliliters, sinabi ni Secretary Cimatu nang ihayag niya na reresolbahin na ng DENR - sa wakas - ang problema na pinag-ugatan ng desisyon ng Korte Suprema may 10 taon na ang nakalipas.

Sinabi ng kalihim na magtatatag ang DENR ng apat na Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) sa baybayin ng Manila Bay - sa Maynila, Navotas-Malabon, Pasay-Paranaque, at Las Piñas - upang tutukan ang paglilinis sa lawa na nakatakdang simulan sa susunod na taon. Sasaklawin nito ang pinakamaruming bahagi ng lawa, ang mga lugar na malapit sa mga siyudad sa Metro Manila.

Hindi masyadong marumi ang mga baybayin sa Bataan, Pampanga, at Bulacan sa hilaga, at Cavite sa timog. Habang umuusad ang paglilinis sa lawa, asahan natin ang masusing monitoring sa tubig, kabilang ang nasa mga nabanggit na lugar.

Isinara ang Boracay dahil masyado nang kinulapulan ng polusyon ang tubig nito mula sa mga hotel, restaurants, at iba pang establisimyento na tumatanggap sa milyun-milyong turista. Nagsimula na nitong ipakita ang hindi magandang mukha ng Pilipinas sa mga dayuhang bisita sa bansa at kailangan nang buong paninindigang aksiyunan ni Pangulong Duterte ang pagpapasara rito sa loob ng anim na buwan.

Matagal nang nakumpirma ang suliranin sa polusyon sa Manila Bay, at taong 2008 nang inatasan ng Korte Suprema, batay sa reklamo ng isang grupo ng mamamayan, ang 13 ahensiya ng pamahalaan, sa pangunguna ng DENR "[to] to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay, restore and maintain its waters to make them fit for swimming, skin diving, and other forms of contact recreation."

Walang mahalagang naisakatuparan sa sumunod na 10 taon simula nang ilabas ng Korte Suprema ang utos nito. May mga lokal na ordinansa ng nagbabawal sa paglangoy sa maruming tubig ng lawa, habang nagsasagawa ng regular na paglilinis sa baybayin ang iba't ibang grupo upang hakutin ang tone-toneladang plastik at iba pang mga basura na nagmumula sa mga bayang nakapaligid sa lawa.

Ngayon lamang umaksiyon ang DENR, sa naging pahayag ni Secretary Cimatu na ipatutupad na nito ang utos ng Korte Suprema noong 2008, upang linisin at isailalim sa rehabilitasyon ang Manila Bay. Subalit tanging ang DENR sa 13 ahensiya ng gobyerno ang tumugon sa utos ng Kataas-taasang Hukuman.

Ang malaking bahagi ng dumi sa Manila Bay ay nagmula sa mga kanal na umaagos sa Pasig River at sa iba pang daluyan sa Metro Manila at mga karatig-lalawigan. Ang apat na bagong community center ng DENR ang regular na magmo-monitor sa fecal coliform level sa Manila Bay simula sa susunod na taon, subalit mistulang bumaba ang antas ng polusyon sa lawa hanggang hindi naipatitigil ng mga lokal na pamahalaan ang pagpapagos dito ng mga basura, kasama pa ang milyun-milyong kabahayan sa Metro Manila na walang maayos na waste treatment facilities.

Sa kabuuan, ang plano ng DENR ay isang napakagandang simula na karapat-dapat na bigyan ng pagkakataon.



Talks adopt 'rulebook' to put climate deal into action

KATOWICE (AP) — Almost 200 nations, including the world's top greenhouse gas producers, China and the US, have adopted a set of rules meant to breathe life into the 2015 Paris climate accord by setting out how countries should report their emissions and efforts to reduce them.

But negotiators delayed other key decisions until next year — a move that frustrated environmentalists and countries that wanted more ambitious goals in light of scientists' warnings that the world must shift sharply away from fossil fuels in the coming decade.

"The majority of the rulebook for the Paris agreement has been created, which is something to be thankful for," said Mohamed Adow, a climate policy expert at Christian Aid.

"But the fact countries had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the finish line shows that some nations have not woken up" to the dire consequences of global warming as outlined

in a report by the UN Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC.

Officials at the talks, which ended late Saturday in the Polish city of Katowice, agreed upon universal rules on how nations can cut emissions.

Poor countries secured assurances on financial support to help them reduce emissions, adapt to changes such as rising sea levels and pay for damage that has already happened.

"Through this package, you have made a thousand little steps forward together," said Michal Kurtyka, a senior Polish official who led the talks.

While each country would likely find some parts of the agreement it did not like, he said, efforts were made to balance the interests of all parties.

"We will all have to give in order to gain," he said. "We will all have to be courageous to look into the future and make yet another step for the sake of humanity."



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NATIONS' AGENDAS STALL COLLECTIVE ACTION

CLIMATE TALKS: EMISSIONS PACT SAVED BUT COMMITMENTS LACKING

KATOWICE, POLAND—Fractious climate change talks in Poland showed the limits of international action to limit global warming in a polarized world, putting the onus on individual governments, cities and communities to stop temperatures from rising.

Nearly 200 countries at the United Nations talks here saved the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement from disintegration on Saturday by agreeing on a package of guidelines for its implementation.

But it deferred rules on carbon credits—a spur to business—and lacked any firm commitment to strengthen countries' emissions cut targets by 2020, when the agreement comes into force.

As a result, it left the parties a long way from the Paris deal's

goal of keeping global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, let alone the cap of 1.5 C needed to avert more extreme weather, rising sea levels and the loss of plant and animal species.

The world is heading for a 3-5 C rise in temperatures this century, the UN World Meteorological Organization has said.

The Paris Agreement was based on individual commitments and expectations for the Polish talks to produce much more than rules for how those would be measured had been low.

Political will missing

The unity built in Paris has been shattered by a wave of governments placing national agendas before collective action.

Only a handful of country

leaders were present in Katowice and the UN Secretary General had to fly back to the meeting to urge progress.

"Political will is missing," Alden Meyer, director at the Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit science advocacy group, said as the conference staggered toward a finish delayed for more than 24 hours by last-minute wrangling over parts of the text.

"But it provides the hooks for governments, cities, businesses, civil society etc. to do the work to get (to the Paris Agreement goals)," he said.

For conference president Michal Kurtyka it was a job well done. "Mission accomplished," he wrote on Twitter. "Our children look back at our legacy and recognize that we took the right

decisions at important junctures like the one we face today."

Scratching the surface

For nations already suffering from climate change, the agreement, which did not make clear how pledged funding would be provided, was better than nothing.

Simon Stiell, environment minister of Grenada in the Caribbean, told Reuters it "is barely scratching the surface of what we really require."

Investors said it would take more action at government level to persuade them to pump in the amount of money needed.

"Those countries ... who push ahead with ambitious, long-term climate policies will be the ones to reap the invest-

ment and economic advantages of doing so," said Stephanie Pfeifer, chief executive of Institutional Investors' Group on Climate Change, noting the low-carbon transition was already underway.

The United States, set to withdraw from the UN process at the behest of President Donald Trump, staged an event touting the benefits of burning fossil fuels, including coal, more efficiently, while back at home, Trump has termed the Paris deal "ridiculous."

A scientific report requested by the Paris signatories said the share of coal-fueled power would have to be cut to under 2 percent by 2050, along with big cuts to other fossil fuels, to stop temperatures from rising more than 1.5 C and causing devastat-

ing floods, storms, heat waves and drought.

Row over report

The United States, as well as fellow oil producers Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait, refused to "welcome" the report, a term sought by countries seeking to focus minds on its findings.

The final statement merely welcomed its timely completion and invited parties to make use of the information it contained.

Yet the row over the report was far from the only one: China, India, Russia, Australia, Japan, Brazil and the European Union were all drawn into various rifts, although China won some praise for helping to overcome concern, especially from the United States, that it would sidestep any rules. —REUTERS



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NEWS

Diokno: Surge in flood control projects due to climate change

Climate change, not 'parking'

The huge increase in flood control spending in the 2018 national budget is a response by the government to climate change, according to Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno. It has nothing to do with "parking" pork in the budget, he said, referring to what Sen. Panfilo Lacson has called a "new scheme" employed by congressmen to generate kickbacks from infrastructure projects. —STORY BY **A2**
 DAPHNE GALVEZ

By Daphne Galvez
 @DYGalvezINQ

The surge in flood control spending in the current national budget is the government's response to climate change, Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno said on Monday.

Speaking in a television interview, Diokno said the spike in mitigation spending had nothing to do with the alleged "parking" of pork in the budget.

Diokno was responding to a question about an alleged scheme employed by congressmen to hide pork in the national budget.

The scheme came to light after Sen. Panfilo Lacson detected pork in the P3.8-trillion proposed budget for 2019, which he said was "parked" in the allotments for "well-connected" congressmen, who would offer the money to not-so-well funded districts in exchange for being allowed to choose the con-

tractors for the projects.

Lacson described parking as a "new scheme" to generate kickbacks.

P75-B insertion

House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. last week blamed the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for the insertion of P75 billion in infrastructure spending in the proposed 2019 budget without the knowledge of President Duterte.

House Minority Leader Danilo Suarez later blamed the insertion on Diokno and introduced a resolution urging the President to fire the budget chief.

Malacañang rejected the House move, while the Senate defended Diokno against attacks by the congressmen.

Diokno said in his television interview on Monday that Public Works Secretary Mark Villar was aware of the P75-billion "adjustment" to his agency's



Benjamin Diokno

budget but did not complain.

"Mark should not deny that. He knows that because the budget was presented in the Cabinet and as I've said the instruction of the President: 'If you can't live with this budget then you resign.' Something to that effect," Diokno said.

"Mark did not complain, 'Oops, I don't like the P75 billion.' The record will show he didn't complain," Diokno added.

There was no immediate comment from Villar on Monday.

Flood control spending

Andaya earlier said parking could be the explanation for the spike in flood control spending in the 2018 budget.

He noted that the spending surged from P79 billion in 2017 to P133 billion this year.

In his television interview on Monday, Diokno said the DBM decided to "quadruple" the infrastructure spending this year to respond to climate change.

He said the government had been spending only 2.6 percent of the budget for infrastructure.

"That's low. That's why we have the poorest infrastructure in this part of the world," he said.

"So now our plan is increase that 2.6 percent to about 5 per-



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DIOKNO: Surge in flood

cent and eventually 7 percent," he said.

"That's why they find it big. All of a sudden, 'Wow, the budget is big,'" he said.

The DBM, Diokno said, has nothing to do with parking, which he described as a matter for legislators.

"That's among legislators. That's supposed to be a share of a legislator parked in a district. So that must be coming from a party-list representative. But we have nothing to do with that," he said.

Andaya said last week that the House would investigate the alleged insertions in the draft 2019 budget.

Diokno said in his TV interview on Monday that he was not allowed to appear in the investigation.

"I'm not allowed to attend," he said, without identifying the source of the instruction.

"Because, what do they want

from me? To say that I don't know these people? Then I'll just issue an affidavit. I don't know these people," Diokno said.

EO 464

Asked if the Duterte administration had revived Executive Order (EO) No. 464, which prohibited Cabinet officials from attending congressional inquiries without permission from the President, Diokno replied: "They are actually studying the same EO. And my understanding is we will not be allowed to [attend congressional inquiries]."

EO 464 was introduced in 2005 by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, now the Speaker of the House, at the height of the Senate investigation of a corruption-laden deal with a Chinese company for broadband internet for government offices. She revoked the order in 2008. —WITH A REPORT FROM MAIL AGER INQ

Ph calls for leadership, political will on climate change

By HELEN FLORES

The Philippines has called on world leaders to demonstrate leadership and political will in fighting climate change.

"Climate action and leadership resolve must be demonstrated by all. Now is the time for leadership, not cowardice," Climate Change Commission (CCC) Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman said.

De Guzman made the appeal at the launch of the "Jummemej Declaration" of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) in Katowice, Poland yesterday.

De Guzman leads the Philippine delegation at the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24).

"There is no excuse for inaction among the world's most powerful nations," he said.

The Philippines is among the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change such as rising sea levels, prolonged droughts, floods and changes in rainfall patterns.

"It is our moral duty to be clear about where we stand. We are in Poland in the name of the children of tomorrow whose interests we must secure, compelled by science and duty," said De Guzman.

Citing the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, De Guzman said the only way to keep average global temperatures from rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century is to phase out the use of fossil fuels by 2050.

As chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum in 2015, the Philippines, on behalf of 48 developing countries, led the advocacy for the ambitious global warming threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius.

"Enough of politics. Believe science. No to extinction of the vulnerable," De Guzman said.

"The success of these talks will determine countless lives and existence. The choices leaders weigh here spell the difference between annihilation and hope that we may live far into the future with requisite happiness, peace and security," he said.

In 2013, the Philippines was devastated by Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) that killed more than 7,000 people and displaced more than four million others. Almost \$5 billion worth of property were

the brunt."

"Indecision and weakness in the face of the greatest peril humanity has ever faced is nothing

damaged.

De Guzman said "small, low-lying countries" have "contributed next to nothing, yet we suffer

less than immoral. Enough of indifference and inaction. The decades of apathy and procrastination must end here in Katowice," he added.



Climate talks pass baton in race to stop global warming

KATOWICE, Poland — Fractious climate change talks in Poland showed the limits of international action to limit global warming in a polarized world, putting the onus on individual governments, cities and communities to stop temperatures rising.

Nearly 200 countries at the United Nations talks in Katowice — in the coal mining region of Silesia — saved the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement from disintegration on Saturday by agreeing a package of guidelines for its implementation.

But it deferred rules on carbon credits — a spur to business — and lacked any firm commitment to strengthen countries' emissions cut targets by 2020, when the agreement comes into force.

As such it left the parties a long way from the Paris deal's goal of keeping global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, let alone the cap of 1.5C needed to avert more extreme weather, rising sea levels and the loss of plant and animal species.

The world is heading for a 3-5C rise in temperatures this century, the United Nations World Meteorological Organization has said.

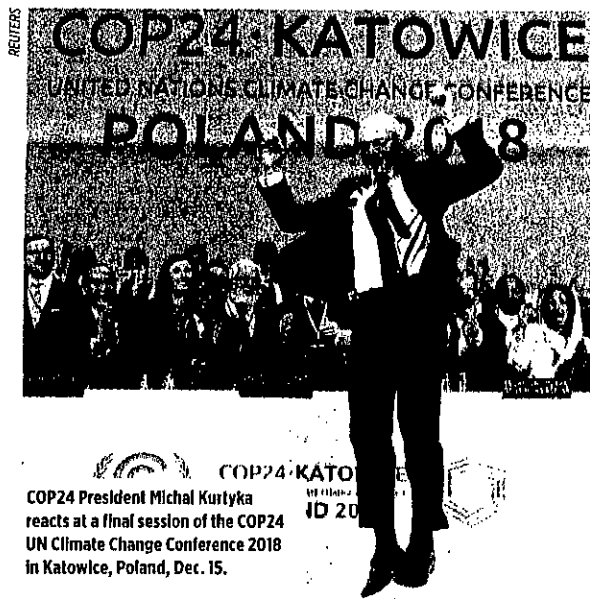
The Paris Agreement is based on individual commitments and expectations for the Polish talks to produce much more than rules for how those would be measured had always been low: the unity built in Paris had been shattered by a wave of governments placing national agendas before collective action.

Only a handful of country leaders were present in Katowice and the UN Secretary-General had to fly back to the meeting to urge progress.

"Political will is missing," Alden Meyer, director at the Union of Concerned Scientists, a non-profit science advocacy group, said as the conference staggered towards a finish delayed for more than 24 hours by last-minute wrangling over parts of the text.

"But it provides the hooks for governments, cities, businesses, civil society, etc. to do the work to get (to the Paris Agreement goals)," he said.

For conference President Michal Kurtyka it was a job well done. "Mission accomplished," he wrote on Twitter. "Our children look back at our legacy and recognize that we took the right decisions at important junctures like the one we face today."



COP24 President Michal Kurtyka reacts at a final session of the COP24 UN Climate Change Conference 2018 in Katowice, Poland, Dec. 15.

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

For nations already suffering from climate change the agreement, which did not make clear how pledged funding would be provided, was only just better than nothing.

Simon Stiell, Environment Minister of Grenada in the Caribbean, told Reuters it "is barely scratching the surface of what we really require."

Investors said it would take more action at government level to persuade them to pump in the amount of money needed.

"Those countries... who push ahead with ambitious, long-term climate policies will be the ones to reap the investment and economic advantages of doing so," said Stephanie Pfeifer, Chief Executive of Institutional Investors' Group on Climate Change, noting the low-carbon transition was already underway.

The United States, set to withdraw from the UN process at the behest of President Donald Trump, staged an event touting the benefits of burning fossil fuels, including coal, more efficiently, while back at home, Mr. Trump has termed the Paris deal "ridiculous."

A scientific report requested by the Paris signatories said the share of coal-fuelled power would have to be cut to under 2 percent by 2050, along with big cuts to other fossil fuels, to stop temperatures rising more than 1.5C

and causing devastating floods, storms, heat waves and drought.

The United States, as well as fellow oil producers Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait, refused to "welcome" the report, a term sought by countries seeking to focus minds on its findings.

The final statement merely welcomed its timely completion and invited parties to make use of the information it contained.

Yet the row over the report was far from the only one: China, India, Russia, Australia, Japan,

Brazil and the European Union were all drawn into various rifts, although China won some praise for helping to overcome concern, especially from the United States, that it would sidestep any rules.

"I think they have come a long way in recognizing they need to provide confidence," Jennifer Morgan, executive director of Greenpeace International, said of the Chinese negotiators.

Describing Washington as "out of touch," Morgan noted the rules agreed in Poland nevertheless bound all countries, including the United States until its planned withdrawal in 2020, an achievement in itself.

"But that doesn't substitute for the need to build ambition," she said.

CHOKING COAL

Poland, hosting its third UN climate conference, came in for criticism for its commitment to coal, the most polluting of fossil fuels.

The meeting's final statement merely "noted" Warsaw's call for a "just transition" allowing communities dependent on coal more time to adjust.

The appointment of Mr. Kurtyka, Poland's deputy environment minister, to preside over the talks appeased some campaigners angered by the government's previous choice, former environment minister, Jan Szyszko.

Mr. Szyszko had expressed doubts that global warming is man-made in the past and increased logging in the ancient forest of Bialowieza, declared illegal by the European Union's top court.

However, Mr. Kurtyka's job was complicated by Poland's environment minister saying he did not want discussion about raising ambition at the talks and Poland's president vowing not to let anyone "murder coal mining."

A focus on technicalities in the first week was interpreted by campaigners as a pretext to avoid discussions on pledging deeper emissions cuts. Mr. Kurtyka got countries to focus on the guidelines near the end of the second week, but there was no collective action to harmonize or improve disparate pledges.

"Each delegation has its own domestic interests... Our role, as the presidency, is to find balance, which ensures reaching a compromise," Adam Guibourge-Czetvertynski, Poland's chief negotiator, said in the second week of talks.

Poland's ruling party, the nationalist-minded Law and Justice, wants to scale back the share of coal in electricity production from 80 percent to 60 percent by 2030.

But the production of hard coal is expected to be stable for decades, though 72% of Poles think it should be gradually phased out to reduce emissions, according to a survey by state-controlled pollster CBOS in November.

Katowice, the heart of Poland's coal region, is among the most polluted cities in Europe, because many people heat their homes by burning low quality coal, which is the cheapest. Residents say they have no choice.

"No climate decisions, even the best ones, will change the content of our wallets," said Maria Ligeza, an 83-year-old Katowice citizen.

"Without help, people will be still burning what they have." — Reuters

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A broader look at today's business

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PIK expresses relief on UN climate Summit

COP24 closing



Cecilio T. Arillo

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JOHAN ROCKSTRÖM, resilience scientist and director-designate of the leading Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), and Ottmar Edenhofer, director of the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change, expressed relief at the closing of the United Nations Climate Change Summit in Katowice, Poland. Both were key participants at the Katowice Summit.

"With countries recognizing the need for global collaboration to deal with the global climate crisis, the Paris Agreement is alive and kicking, despite a rise in populism and nationalism. With the rule book now finally adopted, the Paris Agreement can be implemented," they said.

Overall, the Katowice decisions provide enough momentum to move on, they added.

Their biggest concern, however, is that the UN Summit in Katowice failed to align ambitions with science, in particular missing the necessity of making clear that global emissions from fossil fuels must be cut by half by 2030 to stay in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on October 8.

The Special Report on Global

Warning of 1.5 degrees Celsius was approved in Incheon, South Korea, based on over 6,000 scientific references, and was prepared by 91 authors from 40 countries.

"This is a real concern. We continue to follow a path that will take us to a very dangerous 3 to 4 degrees warmer world within this century. Extreme weather events hit people all across the planet already at only 1 degree global warming. Especially, the US is a hard-hit victim, a nation that played an unfortunate role at the climate summit, which already suffers and will suffer even more in the future from an increase of regional droughts and hurricanes," the PIK said in a statement shared to Database.

"Katowice is only one step on the long and winding road to achieving sustainable prosperity within a

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A broader look at today's business

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fossil fuel-free future. All of us need to stop tiptoeing and speed up our steps. And Europe can and must be a forerunner," the PIK pointed out.

"Once again, governments across the world have proven that they're capable and willing to cooperate in order to protect their citizens from climate risks. Despite a growing number of populist governments, multilateralism succeeded," Rockstrom and Edenhofer said.

"However," they said, "the world needs more than climate policy targets and processes—it needs concrete measures, and they must be taken now. In this respect, climate change can no longer be simply regarded as the biggest market failure of all time—with the continued rise of global greenhouse-gas emissions after years of negotiation, it has also become an unprecedented government failure.

"Through appropriate policy measures—like effective carbon-dioxide pricing—governments have to build a new trust-relationship to citizens. Carbon pricing cannot solve everything, yet without it nothing can be solved. And governments can actually use carbon pricing to enhance social justice, because the generated income can and must be given back to the people, be it through electricity tax cuts, infrastructure investments or Christmas cheques."

The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C, also known as SR15, was prepared in response to

an invitation from the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2015, when they reached the Paris Agreement. The report was prepared under the joint scientific leadership of all three IPCC Working Groups, with support from the Working Group I Technical Support Unit.

The IPCC, the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change, was established by the United Nations Environment Program and the World Meteorological Organization in 1988 to provide policy-makers with regular scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and potential future risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation strategies. It has 195 member-states.

The IPCC provides governments and scientific institutions with information that they can use to develop climate policies. Its assessments are a key input into the international negotiations to tackle climate change and its reports are drafted and reviewed in several stages, thus guaranteeing objectivity and transparency.

The UN agency mobilizes hundreds of scientists and officials from diverse backgrounds, backed by a dozen permanent staff serving as the IPCC's secretariat.

To reach the writer, e-mail cecilio.arillo@gmail.com.



Underwater exhibition for coral rehab launched

JCI Manila, in partnership with Gold Seas Tuna Chunks, launched the first and official underwater exhibition that will become artificial coral reefs.

Gold Seas Tuna Chunks's dedication to responsible and sustainable fishing practices, which has enabled it to be certified dolphin-safe, has expanded this commitment to help rehabilitate Philippine coral reefs and revive the rich marine ecosystem.

The Philippines is considered a center of marine biodiversity in the world, with coral—reefs stretching 26,000 kms nurturing more species of fish and corals than any other marine environment on Earth. At present, reef degradation caused by factors such as pollution, coral bleaching, destruction of mangroves and unsustainable fishing methods have affected the Philippines's coral reefs. Only 5 percent of the Philippines's coral reefs remain in good condition.

It can take thousands of years

for natural coral reefs to regenerate. Long-lasting, artificial reefs are a useful and faster way to help restore the reef systems to a natural and productive balance. These multipurpose artworks will help serve the function of natural coral reefs: serve as nurseries for growing fish and protect the shoreline from erosion. They can also help to boost ecotourism, and provide jobs in a green economy. In 2011 Junior Chamber International (JCI) Manila launched project Sea of Life. It is a marine environment awareness effort through artificial reefs deployment, coral transplantation, mangrove planting, coastal cleanup and marine environmental awareness seminars.

Since then, Sea of Life has made a positive environmental impact in marine ecosystems in Batangas, Bohol, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Cebu and Iloilo. This month, Sea of Life is set to launch the first-ever underwater exhibition that aims to rehabilitate corals.



Trustad Skoob

The Manila Times

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Illegal fishing threatens marine ecosystem

"ILLEGAL fishing continues in Philippine waters, threatening the sustainability of the fisheries sector and harming the marine ecosystems."

FAO Representative to the Philippines José Luis Fernandez said in a statement that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) remains a major threat to the country's marine resources and fishing communities.

The country's thriving marine life serves as a magnet for illegal activities by both local fishermen and foreign vessels.

In 2014, the European Union (EU) castigated the Philippines and Papua New Guinea for not doing enough against IUUF. In 2015, the EU lifted the "yellow card" warning in recognition of the significant progress made by the Philippines in addressing IUUF.

A threat to marine ecosystems, IUUF upsets efforts to sustainable fishery by taking advantage of dishonest officials and exploiting mismanaged and weak governments that have no institutional capacity and resources to monitor, control, and conduct ocean surveillance in their territories.

IUUF is sometimes carried out by organized crimes, where illegal-caught fish is being transported in a transshipment.

A number of illegal fishing methods are used not only in the Philippines, but also in other parts of the world where fishing is a means of livelihood. These include the use of explosives such as dynamites, improvised explosives made of fertilizer and diesel, or harmful substances like cyanide, to blast, stun, and kill not only fish but also other marine life.

Local fishermen use gill nets or mesh-fishing nets where even the smallest spawns could not escape captivity.

to be seen. This initiative led to the funding of sea borne enforcement in the concerned local municipalities and the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.

In early September 2018, the provincial government of Iloilo reported that a sea patrol conducted under the joint efforts of Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Iloilo Provincial BantayDagat Task Force successfully nabbed 17 vessels for various maritime offenses, including trawl fishing without corresponding permits from LGUs in the vicinity of municipal waters and net fishing in marine protected areas.

A BantayDagat volunteer from Concepcion, Iloilo said that while he and his town mates engaged in an activity that might put their lives in danger, they were happy to help preserve the territorial waters of their town for the benefit of their entire community.

Marine biodiversity

One of the most important reef systems in the world is the Coral Triangle. It spans 132,636 square kilometers or equivalent to one and a half percent of the total area of the world's oceans. Coral Triangle also represents at least a third of the world's total coral reefs.

Coral Triangle extends across six countries in the west region of the Pacific Ocean: covering parts of the territorial waters of Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands. At the center of this tremendously important triangular marine location is the Philippines.

The strategic location of the Philippines as the heart of the world's marine ecosystem also opens doors for cooperation to achieve sustainable development for the fishery sector.

Another destructive form of illegal industrial fishing is bottom trawling. This is done by dragging a heavily weighted net across the seafloor. The net drags along anything that it encounters at the bottom: fish, corals, and other species and organisms vital to sustaining the marine ecosystem.

Once the net is pulled onto the surface and the trawler sorted and gathered the prized catch, the other species are just thrown dead back to the sea.

Efforts to combat IUUF

Oceana Philippines reported that it photographed along Tañon Strait the presence of suspiciously large boats and nets lurking in waters where they are not supposed

The richness of marine biodiversity in the Philippines could not be undermined and the world recognizes this distinction. Oceana, an organization working for the protection and restoration of the world's oceans, said that compared with the whole Caribbean, there are more species of corals found in about twenty hectares in Central Visayas alone.

Efforts from various marine conservation institutions, environmentalists and scientists are directed to help the Philippine government achieve sustainable fishery through research, data gathering and sharing, funding, and other technical and technological assistance.

SHARP MINDS CONTENT

EcoWaste warns on toys with high lead content

By **CHITO CHAVEZ**

EcoWaste Coalition, the toxic watch dog warned the public on the proliferation of lead-laced discounted gift items and similar consumer products being openly sold in the market.

In its routine inspection, the organization has discovered holiday gift items sold below ₱150 that consumers should avoid due to their undisclosed lead content.

Lead is a highly poisonous chemical that is known to cause irreparable and irreversible mental and physical impairment affecting children as well as adults. The group noted that young children are most susceptible to the adverse effects of lead exposure as their brains and nervous systems are still developing.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2013-24 prohibits lead and lead compounds in the production of children's toys and sets a 90 parts per million (ppm) total lead content limit for lead in paint.

"It's nice to give and receive gifts during this joyous season. However, not many of us are aware that we might be giving dangerous gifts laden with hazardous substances such as lead, which can result in intellectual disability, developmental problems and other health woes for the innocent recipient," said Thony Dizon, Chemical Safety

Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

"Some gift items may pose choking and other hazards that are likewise a threat to a child's health and safety," he added.

To raise consumer awareness on the need to be cautious when buying gifts, the EcoWaste Coalition released a list of items procured from retailers in Divisoria, Manila and subsequently screened for lead content using a portable X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analytical device.

He noted the toys, in particular, lacked the required market authorization from health authorities.

Among the gift items found to contain lead above the 90 ppm limit are as follows: a fidget spinner, 198,900 ppm; tall yellow-painted "Hi, I'm Monkey" vacuum flask, 33,400 ppm; short yellow-painted "Despicable Me" vacuum flask, 28,600 ppm; green glass cup with the words "Mickey Mouse", 25,800 ppm; yellow glass cup with the words "Spongebob", 24,300 ppm; "Wonderful" xylophone, 9,696 ppm; several "Kai Xin" laser toys with lead content ranging from 630 to 4,632 ppm; mini-xylophone, 1,994 ppm; "Funny Toys" lizards, 1,885 ppm; toy farm animals, 1,161 ppm.

The organization also advised consumers to avoid giving dolls, soft balls and squeaky toys that are made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic, which may contain toxic additives such as lead stabilizers and phthalate plasticizers.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

New plant species named after Filipina biodiversity expert

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

A new plant species endemic to the Philippines has been named after Filipino biodiversity expert Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim.

Medinilla theresae is a new edaphic-endemic species that can only be found in the Dinagat Island and Davao Oriental named after Lim, the executive director of the Los Baños-based ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.

She is a former director of the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau.

The terrestrial, erect, cauliflorous shrub found in ultramafic soils, stands up to 1.5 meters tall.

This species is presently known to be found in Mt. Redondo, Dinagat Island, and in Mt. Hamiguitan, Davao Oriental.

Renowned taxonomists, professors, and researchers from the University of the Philippines - Dr. Edwino Fernando, Dr. Perry Ong, Dr. Peter Quakenbush and Dr. Edgardo Lillo discovered the new shrub species.

"I am truly honored and grateful for this recognition. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our taxonomists, scientists, and researchers who continue their hard work in discovering new species. I believe that taxonomy is a vital step in conservation simply because you cannot conserve what you do not know," Lim said.

"The number of species awaiting discovery far outweigh those that have been studied. Millions of plants and animals have yet to be studied and may hold tremendous potential as sources

of food, medicine, and other benefits to humans," she added.

According to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, there are more than 30 million species worldwide, but taxonomists have identified only about 1.78 million species of animals, plants, and microorganisms after 250 years of research.

It is estimated that only 10 percent of vertebrates remain to be described, but greater than 50 percent of terrestrial arthropods and up to 95 percent of protozoa are undescribed.

The sheer number of species that

have yet to be discovered requires an army of scientists, each with their own area of expertise, to identify, name, classify, and study the millions of species on earth.

The issue is compounded by the unprecedented rate of global biodiversity loss due to habitat degradation, unsustainable use, pollution, climate change, and other pressures.

These pressures increase the risk of extinction of vulnerable species and it is certain that some species are already lost even before they are named and described.



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Bagong halaman ipinangalan sa Pinoy

Isang bagong uri ng halaman na sa Pilipinas lamang matatagpuan ang ipinangalan sa Filipino biodiversity expert na si Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim.

Ang *Medinilla theresae* ay ang bagong edaphic-endemic species na matatagpuan lamang sa Dinagat Island at Davao Oriental.

Ipinangalan ito kay Lim, nagtatrabaho bilang Executive Director ng Los Baños-based ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity. Siya ay dating Director ng Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau.

Ang terrestrial, erect, cauliflorous

shrub ay matatagpuan sa ultramafic soils, at umaabot sa taas na hanggang 1.5 metro.

Ang species na ito nabatid na kasalukuyang makikita sa Mt. Redondo, Dinagat Island, at sa Mt. Hamiguitan, Davao Oriental.

Ang kilalang taxonomists, professors, at researchers mula sa University of the Philippines na sina Dr. Edwino Fernando, Dr. Perry Ong, Dr. Peter Quakenbush, at Dr. Edgardo Lillo ang nakadiskubre sa bagong shrub species.

"I am truly honored and grateful for this recognition. I would also like

to take this opportunity to thank our taxonomists, scientists, and researchers who continue their hard work in discovering new species. I believe that taxonomy is a vital step in conservation simply because you cannot conserve what you do not know," ani Lim.

Ayon sa United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, mayroong mahigit 30 milyong species sa buong mundo, ngunit halos 1.78 milyong species pa lamang ng hayop, halaman, at microorganisms ang natutukoy ng taxonomists sa loob ng 250 taong pananaliksik.

Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz



Regalong laruan, tiyaking 'di toxic

Nagbabala sa publiko ang toxic watchdog na EcoWaste Coalition laban sa mga panregalo at iba pang produkto na mayroong lead na hayagang ibinebenta sa merkado.

Sa kanilang routine inspection, natukoy ng EcoWaste Coalition ang holiday gift items na ipinagbibili sa halagang P150 pababa na dapat iwasan ng mga konsumidor dahil sa hindi isinisiwalat na lead content ng mga ito.

Ang lead o tingga ay isang nakalalasang kemikal na nagdudulot ng irreparable at irreversible mental at physical impairment sa mga bata at matatanda.

"Not many of us are aware that we might be giving dangerous gifts laden with hazardous substances such as lead, which can result in intellectual disability, developmental problems and other health woes for the innocent recipient,"

ani Thony Dizon, Chemical Safety Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

"Some gift items may pose choking and other hazards that are likewise a threat to a child's health and safety," aniya pa.

Upang itaas ang kamalayan ng consumer na maging maingat sa pagbibili ng mga regalo, naglabas ang EcoWaste Coalition ng listahan ng mga bagay na kanilang nabili mula sa retailers sa Divisoria, Manila at sinuri sa lead content gamit ang portable X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analytical device.

Ayon kay Dizon, ang mga bagay na ito ay walang information at warning tungkol sa kanilang lead content, at walang sapat na etiketa.

Pinuna niya na ang mga laruan ay walang market authorization mula sa mga awtoridad ng kalusugan.

Kabilang sa gift items na natuklasang nagtataglay ng mahigit

90 ppm limit ng lead ay ang mga sumusunod: Red and yellow coated "Naruto Shippuden" fidget spinner, 198,900 ppm; tall yellow-painted "Hi, I'm Monkey" vacuum flask, 33,400 ppm; short yellow-painted "Despicable Me" vacuum flask, 28,600 ppm; green "Mickey Mouse" glass cup, 25,800 ppm; yellow "Spongebob" glass cup, 24,300 ppm; "Wonderful" xylophone, 9,696 ppm; itang "Kai Xin" laser toys na ay lead content mula 630 hanggang 4,632 ppm; mini-xylophone, 1,994 ppm; "Funny Toys" lizards, 1,885 ppm; at toy farm animals, 1,161 ppm.

Ipinapayo din ng EcoWaste Coalition na iwasan ang mga manika, soft balls at tumutunog na laruan na gawa sa polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic, na maaaring nagtataglay ng toxic additives gaya ng lead stabilizers at phthalate plasticizers.

Chito A. Chavez

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

• **Plastic bags
excise tax**

The technical working group (TWG) of the House Committee on Ways and Means has agreed to come up with a substitute bill seeking to impose excise tax on plastic bags used in supermarkets, malls, shops, stores, sales outlets, and other similar establishments. The TWG, presided by Batangas Rep. Lianda Bolivia decided to include all the "pertinent recommendations" of the concerned stakeholders in the substitute measure. The panel is expected to consolidate House Bills 8523 and 8558, authored by Sultan Kudarat Rep. Horacio Suansing Jr. and Manila Rep. John Marvin "Yul Servo" Nieto. HBs 8523 and 8558 seek to impose a P10 tax on each plastic bag used in supermarkets, malls, shops, stores, sales outlets, and other similar establishments to be charged against the customers. "The purpose of the proposed measure is to regulate the use of plastic bags and instill in people's minds the adverse effect on the environment from the improper disposal of plastic bags," Bolivia said. The substitute bill will be reported out to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval when Congress resumes session in January next year. Bukidnon Rep. Manuel Zubiri pointed out that 80 percent of plastic wastes that pollute the soil, waterways and shorelines in the urban areas are the non-reusable or single-use plastic bags, while only 20 percent consist of plastic used as original packaging for goods or products. (Charissa M. Lucatienza)



SHOOTING STRAIGHT

BOBIT S. AVILA

The rule of law is paramount. All must obey

One of the best news we got was when we read that local fisherfolk and environment activists from Bulacan to Cavite last Wednesday staged a protest march calling on the government to block the approval of 10 reclamation projects along Manila Bay that, they said, endanger the lives of about 124,000 persons living along its coastline. Wow! Finally it is now the people who are complaining that certain reclamation projects should never be initiated to start with. We learned that this protest coincided with their filing of a complaint calling on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to deny the environmental compliance certificates (ECC) and area clearance permits of erring land reclamation projects.



I read in my Facebook page no less than Manila Yacht Club Commodore Robert "Bobby" Joseph congratulating the DILG for showing interest in saving Manila Bay and urging the DILG to use its regulatory powers to implement our laws on the environment. I'm glad that there are groups who are opposing the proposed reclamation projects that will span the Manila Bay coastline from Bataan province in the north to Cavite province in the south.

Leon Dulce, National Coordinator of Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment said *"These destructive projects should be prohibited until such time that a rational regulatory framework over coastal resource management is put in place."* These include the Manila Bay Integrated Flood Control and Coastal Defense Expressway Project covering the coastal areas in Navotas City to Balanga City in Bataan; the 2,500-hectare Aerotropolis airport project in Bulacan province; and the 650-hectare Navotas City Coastal Bay Development Project.

The groups submitted their complaint to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Director Metodio Turbella of the Environmental Management Bureau. In their four-page letter-complaint, they said the planned reclamation projects failed to comply with guidelines of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Manila Bay remained unfit for swimming because of high-level pollution caused by trash and other kinds of waste dumped by illegal settlers in Metro Manila.

What more do we need? Manila Bay doesn't need another reclamation project, as the only project it ever needs is to clean up Manila Bay for the future of the young generation. At this point, we hope that Sec. Roy Cimatu not only gets the support of Pres. Rodrigo "Diggong" Duterte and his cabinet...but the support of the people of Metro Manila!

* * *



FIRST PERSON ALEX MAGNO

Oozing



Ineffectual

The conclusion of the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) held in Katowice, Poland was delayed by a day. The Conference is supposed to forge common action on the basis of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Geopolitics and national interests stood in the way of achieving a fuller agreement on how the world might reverse the calamitous progression of climate change.

The final document made progress on specifying reporting protocols for all the participating nations. But that falls woefully short of what is actually required to reverse the process of climate change. By and large, that document is utterly ineffectual to save humanity from itself.

COP's annual meetings have become some sort of empty ritual where, on one hand, alarms are raised over global warming and, on the other hand, nations put their immediate interests ahead of saving the planet.

This year's meeting was preceded by the release of the UN-supported report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is a chilling report that says failure to cap global warming at 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, the outcome will be absolutely catastrophic beyond the medium term. Should present trends continue, global warming could be as high as 3.3C above pre-industrial levels.

We now know that, unless global warming is reversed, the ice covering Greenland will melt into the sea. That could potentially raise sea levels by 23 feet and submerge nearly all the world's major cities.

We now know that in a few more years, climate change will wipe out corals. This will eradicate the areas where fish spawn, leading to a severe decimation of marine life we rely on for food.

We now know that climate change will bring forth more severe weather conditions that will threaten millions. It will wipe out vegetation in the face of creeping desertification. Famine and food shortages will happen.

Despite knowing all of these, humanity has so far failed to come up with an effective global regime to reverse the trend towards annihilation. Nations are not willing to yield sovereignty to a global climate regime. Economies fret about the costs of adopting effective counter-measures.

When Donald Trump became president, he promptly withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement intending the cap global warming at 2C. That he could so cavalierly defy science and imperiously take that tragic step tells us how helpless our global institutions are in the face of ignorant leaders.

Without an effective global regime to enforce common action to quickly reverse climate change, we are totally vulnerable to self-inflicted destruction. We will all be like Nero who fiddled while Rome burned.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lois San Juan
MANTLA BULLETIN
DECEMBER 18, 2013



P-1
Welcome
plan
to clear
Manila
Bay

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PAWIKAN CONSERVATION - Hundreds of sea turtle or pawikan eggs at the shore of Barangay San Francisco in San Fernando City, La Union are prepared for transfer to the Pawikan Conservation Center to ensure that poachers and other predators are kept at bay until they hatch. (Erwin Beleo)



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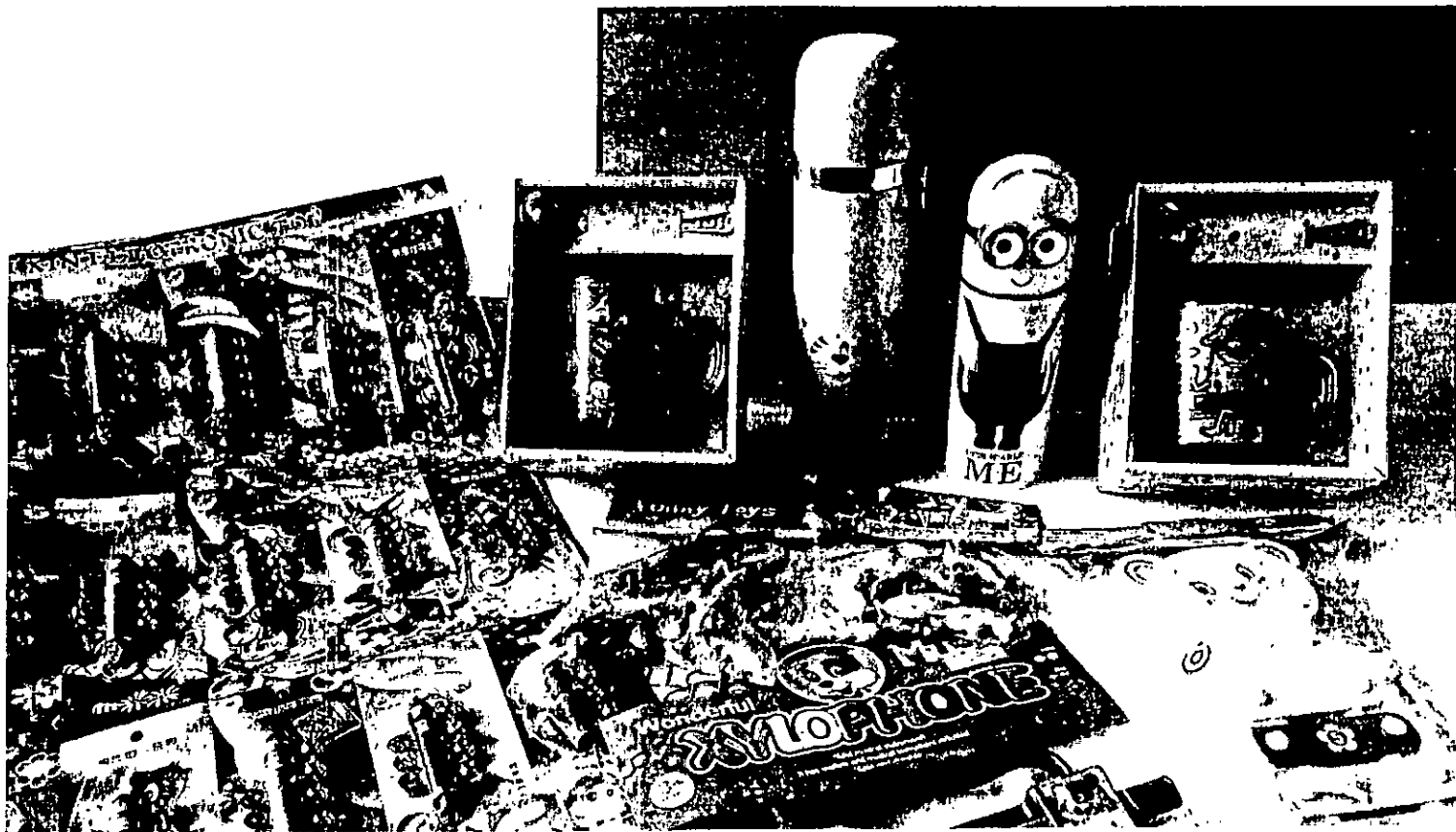
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18 DEC 2013

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Holiday spotters Christmas gifts should not be at the expense of the health and safety of children such as these toys which a civic group said possibly have high lead contents.

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