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**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## DENR YEAREND REPORT 2019:

# Saving Manila Bay

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

**Early 2019 saw the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) rallying all concerned sectors to work together and support efforts to rehabilitate the heavily polluted Manila Bay.**

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu even gave commitment that DENR personnel will be "at the front row" to achieve the goal of making the coastal waters of Manila Bay fit for swimming again.

Although Manila Bay is still known for having one of the most beautiful sunsets, its waters are considered the most polluted in the country due to domestic sewage, toxic industrial effluents from factories and shipping operations, and leachate from garbage dumps.

Cimatu said the government is prepared to show political will to enforce the 2008 Supreme Court mandamus to clean up Manila Bay and its tributaries.

Before the formal launching of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, DENR said it started identifying establishments that are non-compliant with environmental laws, particularly the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

"We will not only clean Manila Bay, we will be able to do something better for our countrymen and for the next generation," Cimatu stressed.

The official said the regional offices of the DENR in Metro Manila and the Calabarzon region, as well as its provincial offices in Pampanga and Bataan, will be involved in the rehabilitation efforts.

The DENR's goal, he said, is to bring down the coliform level in all esteros to 100 most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliters (ml).

The agency had previously reported that the coliform level in Manila Bay had reached as much as 330 million MPN/100 ml, which is 3.3 million percent over the standard.

Malacañang has approved a budget for the rehabilitation program amounting to P42.95 billion for three years. This amount will cover cleanup of priority waterways, relocation of informal settler families (ISFs), and implementation of temporary sanitation facilities in ISF communities prior to relocation.

According to Cimatu, around P6 billion or roughly 14 percent of the allocation will be used for cleanup activities, including information and education campaign on the importance of keeping Manila Bay clean.

The remaining P36 billion will be spent for relocation and provision of support systems like access to jobs and livelihoods and construction of town centers with recreational areas, markets, church, schools and hospitals.

### SC mandamus

It was in 2008 when the Supreme Court issued a mandamus directing the DENR and 12 other government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay and to restore and maintain its water quality to Class SB level.

Class SB level classifies coastal and marine waters as safe for regular use by the public for activities such as bathing, swimming and skin diving.

However, efforts of mandamus agencies to clean up the bay have not been visible or felt during the 10 years the high court directive has been in effect.

This prompted Cimatu to call on all government offices around Manila Bay to ensure their compliance with the country's clean water and solid waste management laws in line with the rehabilitation of the heavily polluted bay.

"Solid waste remains a huge problem in the country owing to non-segregation, rampant use of single-use plastic products and improper waste disposal," the official said.

He also said that government buildings should set a good example to commercial and residential establishments surrounding Manila Bay and its tributaries in complying with environmental laws, particu-

larly the Clean Water Act of 2004 and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Cimatu pointed out that it is

particularly those in the Manila Bay area, to make sure they are connected to sewer lines or have their own sewage treatment plants for proper wastewater disposal. He also reminded them to manage their solid waste to minimize garbage that end up in landfills or oceans.

The DENR chief also appealed to local government units (LGUs) to manage their septage by ensuring that all commercial and residential establishments in their areas are treating their wastewater prior to discharge to water bodies.

He reminded them of their duty to implement environmental laws and to clear waterways of informal settlers who contribute to water pollution.

Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 provides that LGUs are primarily responsible for waste segregation and disposal.

On Jan. 27, 2018, the program dubbed "Battle for Manila Bay" was finally launched. It brought together more than 1,000 participants, mostly personnel from the DENR and 12 other government agencies tasked by the Supreme Court to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay.

Aside from the DENR, other agencies that took part in the rehabilitation are the Department of Tourism, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of

Trade and Industry, Department of National Defense, and Department of Science and Technology.

Other participating agencies were the Pasig River Rehabilitation

Commission, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, National Housing Authority, Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor, Manila Water Co. Inc., Maynilad Water Services Inc., various local government units, non-government organizations and other stakeholders.

And to speed up rehabilitation efforts, President Duterte issued Administrative Order 16 creating the inter-agency Manila Bay Task Force.



Saving Manila Bay ...

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Cimatu was designated as the task force chairperson, with Interior Secretary Eduardo Año and Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat as vice chairs.

Specifically, the DENR was tasked to strictly enforce Sections 16 and 19 of Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 on the conduct of containment, removal, and cleanup operations, and the exercise or supervision and control on all aspects of water quality management in Manila Bay.

Following the secretary's announcement, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), an attached agency of DENR, started issuing closure orders to establishments found dumping untreated wastewater into Manila Bay and have no proper wastewater facility.

Improper wastewater disposal is a violation of RA 9275 and could be a ground for closure of the establishment and its wastewater

facilities.

Violations include non-compliance with RA 9275, RA 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999, and RA 6969 or the Toxic

Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act.

There were also businesses found operating with no Environmental Compliance Certificates in violation of Presidential Decree 1586 or the Environmental Impact Statement System.

A month after the rehabilitation program was launched, Cimatu issued a challenge to the 173 mayors of cities and municipalities surrounding the bay to do their share in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay by cleaning up rivers and estuaries leading to the heavily polluted water body.

The Manila Bay region has a coastline of 190 kilometers and covers Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Regions III and IV-A) and the National Capital Region. It consists of 178 local government units and 17 major river systems.

### Bioremediation

Starting March, the DENR took the Manila Bay rehabilitation effort down to the *esteros* and rivers draining into the bay with simultaneous cleanup activities, including bioremediation, infrastructure improvement and other engineering interventions.

Bioremediation refers to the use of naturally occurring microorganisms or other forms of life to consume and break down environmental pollutants in order to clean up a polluted site.

Cimatu also issued Memorandum Circular 2019-01 requiring all establishments within the Manila Bay region to connect to existing sewer lines or set up their own sewerage treatment plants to ensure that wastewater is properly collected and treated according to DENR standards.

The circular covers all government facilities, subdivisions, condominiums, commercial centers, hotels, sports and recreational facilities, hospitals, market places, public buildings, industrial complex and other similar establishments.

The DENR commissioned a vulnerability assessment for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project last June by the Ecosystem Research and Development Bureau. The study revealed that an intensified solid waste management program, stricter monitoring of polluting industries, and reforestation of watershed and mangrove areas are necessary to ensure the success of efforts to rehabilitate the bay.

Cimatu also took to task ISFs living along waterways by reminding them to avail themselves of the government's relocation program.

Last Sept. 21, the DENR again launched another massive cleanup of Manila Bay, as the nation joined the rest of the world in observing the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Day 2019.

Established in 1986 by the Washington-based environmental group Ocean Conservancy, the ICC is recognized as the world's largest volunteer effort for ocean's health.

In a meeting with senior officials of the DENR in November, Cimatu gave the go signal for the hiring of at least 2,000 estero rangers who will help LGUs within and near Manila Bay to address indiscriminate waste disposal and improve garbage collection within their respective jurisdictions.

Recent updates on the Manila Bay rehabilitation showed that there has been great improvement in the bay's water quality.

DENR said portions of Manila Bay, particularly in the Bataan and Cavite area, are now swimmable.



## CIMATU: MLA BAY REHAB 'TOP PRIORITY' TILL 2022

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonlmayuga

**D**ETERMINED to make Manila Bay's waters fit for swimming by the time President Duterte steps down in 2022, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is gearing up to sustain the gains of the "Battle for Manila Bay."

The rehabilitation of Manila Bay, which followed the successful campaign in Boracay and continuing efforts in several popular beaches-cum tourism areas in the country, topped the DENR's year-end accomplishment report to Malacañang this year.

In a statement, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the rehabilitation of Manila Bay will remain the DENR's top priority in the next three years.

While rehabilitating a heavily polluted body of water is proving to be an extremely difficult task, the official said he is more determined than ever to win the battle to restore the historic bay's water to its pristine state.

Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force (MBTF), reported that while much has been achieved since the Manila Bay rehabilitation kicked off with the launch of the Battle for Manila Bay on January 26, "much more needs to be done" to achieve the ultimate goal of making it fit again for swimming, and other forms of contact recreation.

"Our effort to restore Manila Bay is now in full swing and we hope to sustain the momentum of restoring it to its former glory in the coming years," the country's chief steward for the environment and natural resources said.

The ongoing rehabilitation is currently in its first phase of the cleanup and water quality

monitoring phase.

The next two phases will involve the massive relocation of informal settlers in addition to more rehabilitation works plus the all-important education, protection and sustainment aspect of the campaign.

The MBTF has identified 44,125 informal settler families living within the Manila Bay region. A total of 51 families—specifically situated along Estero de San Antonio de Abad—were already relocated to Tala, Caloocan City, ahead of the target date of the massive relocation.

In line with this, 547 kilometers of easements have been delineated in NCR and Central Luzon.

In 2019, the ambitious rehabilitation program kept DENR officials and employees, including that of its attached agencies, bureaus and services on their toes.

As of September 26, the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau and the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) inspected 9,708 commercial establishments around Manila Bay. Of this number, 2,478 were issued notices of violations and 107 were slapped with cease-and-desist orders.

Since the rehabilitation started in January, close to 70,000 volunteers from the NCR, Central Luzon and Calabarzon have collected over 2.3 million kg of waste through cleanups, trash boats and garbage traps.

A total of 70 stations were monitored in the Manila Bay region—31 bathing beaches, 18 river mouths, 16 drainage outfalls, and five rivers.

To improve the ecosystem in the area, the DENR led the planting of native and fruit-bearing tree seedlings, and mangrove propagules.

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## Mla Bay. ♦ CONTINUED FROM A8

The agency also intensified its information and education campaign (IEC) on the importance of rehabilitating Manila Bay by conducting over 120 seminars, training, and activities participated in by more than 8,100 individuals. The DENR also came out with 3,574 printed materials, such as on the ongoing rehabilitation, as well as nine information campaigns and 43 updates posted on various social-media platforms.

Cimatu said the interventions related to IEC will further increase as the rehabilitation progresses. "We hope that communities will imbibe the knowledge that was handed to them in ensuring the cleanliness in areas they live in," he said. The DENR also reactivated its coordination with 12 other government agencies covered by the 2008 Supreme Court continuing mandamus for the cleanup, rehabilitation, and preservation of Manila Bay. **Jonathan L. Mayuga**



# Manila Bay restoration to continue – DENR

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) vowed that the restoration of Manila Bay would continue until 2022.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said rehabilitation efforts remain in "full swing" almost a year after the government began the clean-up program.

"[W]e hope to sustain the momentum of restoring it to its former glory in the coming years," he said in a statement.

The official said the government aims to make Manila Bay "fit again for swimming and other forms of contact recreation."

The department said the first phase of the program is the bay's clean-up and

water quality monitoring.

The next two phases will involve relocation and rehabilitation, and education, protection and sustainment.

As of September 2019, the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau and the Laguna Lake Development Authority had inspected 9,703 commercial

establishments around Manila Bay. Of this number, 2,478 were issued notices of violations and 107 were slapped with cease and desist orders.

Since the rehabilitation started in January, the DENR said close to 70,000 volunteers have collected over 2.3 million kilograms of waste. **LISBET K. ESMAEL**



## Rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay prayoridad pa rin

**S**INABI ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) nitong Martes na pangunahing prayoridad pa rin nito ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay sa susunod na dalawang taon.

Sinabi ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, namumuno sa Manila Bay Task Force (MBTF), na mas marami pa ang kailangang gawin para matamo ang ultimate goal na maaari na muling lumangoy sa look at magawa ang iba pang contact recreation.

Sinimulan ang Manila Bay rehabilitation nitong Enero 2019.

"Our effort to restore Manila Bay is now in full swing and we hope to sustain the momentum of restoring it to its former glory in the coming years," ani Cimatu.

Kasalukuyang nasa first phase ang rehabilitasyon, ang paglilinis at monitoring sa kalidad ng tubig.

Ang susunod na dalawang kabanata ay ang relocation at rehabilitation, at ang education, protection and sustainment.

Mahigit 2.3 milyong kilo ng basura ang nakolekta sa pamamagitan ng mga paglilinis, trash boats at garbage traps sa Metro Manila, Central Luzon, at Southern Luzon.

Kabuuang 70 istasyon ang na-monitor sa Manila Bay region – 31 bathing beaches, 18 river mouths, 16 drainage outfalls at limang ilog.

Tinukoy na ng MBTF ang 44,125 pamilya ng informal settler na naninirahan sa loob Manila Bay region. Limampu't isang pamilya - partikular na naninirahan sa Estero de San Antonio de Abad - ang inilipat na sa Tala, Caloocan City.

Para mapabuti ang ecosystem sa lugar, pinangunahan ng DENR ang pagtatanim ng native at fruit-bearing tree seedlings at mangrove propagules.

Pinaigting din nito ang kanyang formation and education campaign (IEC) sa kahalagahan ng muling pagbuhay sa Manila Bay kaugnay sa pamamagitan ng pagsagawa ng mahigit 120 seminars, trainings, at activities na nilahukan ng mahigit 8,100 indibidwal.

Naglabas ang DENR ng 3,574 printed materials, gaya ng tungkol sa nagpapatuloy na rehabilitasyon, gayundin ang siyam na information campaigns at 43 updates na ipinaskil sa iba't ibang social media platforms.

Sinabi ni Cimatu na ang interventions kaugnay sa IEC ay lalong magpapataas sa mga progreso ng rehabilitasyon.

"We hope that communities will imbibe the knowledge that was handed to them in ensuring the cleanliness in areas they live in," aniya.

**Enalyn De Vera-Ruiz**



## DENR wants LGUs to impose penalties in addition to RA 9003

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is encouraging local government units (LGU) to pass ordinances penalizing improper trash disposal over and above the penalties laid out in Republic Act (RA) No. 9003.

"We want to encourage the local government to come up with an ordinance which is... on top of the P1,000 (of RA 9003)... so that once and for all *ang ating mga mamamayan* (our citizens) will take the garbage issue seriously," Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Unit Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said in a phone interview.

Also known as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, the law sets out guidelines for solid waste man-

agement and penalizes litterers and garbage dumpers with fines of between P300 and P1,000. An alternative penalty is community service of between 1-15 days.

Mr. Antiporda said that the department is also pushing legislators to amend the 20-year-old law since it has not had a major impact.

"For 20 years *hindi tayo naging successful* so we need to amend it *para lalo pang palakasin yung ating batas* (we were not successful so we need to amend it to strengthen enforcement)," he said in a news conference on Wednesday in Quezon City.

Mr. Antiporda said that he is hopeful that LGU ordinances and Congressional amendments will be done within 2020.

If properly implemented, he said that only 20-30% of the country's waste will end up in landfills.

"This is a good suggestion. I know this will become successful if we will make drastic moves on how we can change the culture of the people when it comes to taking care of their waste," he said.

The DENR plans to propose an additional P7.2-billion budget in 2021 to build sanitary landfills for each of the 248 congressional districts. Mr. Antiporda said that if the procurement process is fast-tracked, the implementation could be completed in a year.

If this plan succeeds, he said the goal for the succeeding year is two landfills for every district. — Vincent Mariel P. Galang



## Panawagan ng DENR sa LGUs **MAS MABIGAT NA MULTA SA GARBAGE-SEGREGATION VIOLATORS**

**H**INILING ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa local government units na patawan ng mas mabigat na multa ang mga hindi magbubukod ng kanilang basura.

"Our proposal to the local government units... we encourage them to come up with ordinances that give a minimum of P1,000 [fine] for those who will not segregate their solid waste," wika ni Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

"Yun po ang hinihiling natin na magkaroon ng talagang penalties na ika nga, eh mararamdaman o masasaktan ang tao para maramdaman din nila ang ginagawa nila para sa kalikasan," sabi pa ni Antiporda.

Ang stiffer penalties na ipapataw ng LGUs ay bukod pa sa P300 hanggang P1,000 multa na babayaran ng mga lalabag sa Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"Urging LGUs to come up with stiffer penalties in their local ordinances is a faster way to address the

'culture of indiscipline' on waste disposal than amending the Republic Act, No. 9003 or the Solid Waste Management law," paliwanag ng DENR official.

"If solid waste are properly segregated as recyclables, biodegradable materials, and residuals, the amount of garbage ending up in sanitary landfills will be reduced to only about 20% to 30% as biodegradable wastes can be used as compost while recyclables can be reused for other purposes." **PMRT**





## **Iniwang ng mga bumisita sa Luneta DENR DISMAYADO SA GABUNDOK NA BASURA**

**DISMAYADO** ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa 50 tonelada ng basurang iniwan ng mga bumisita sa Luneta Park nitong Kapaskuhan.

Ayon sa DENR, pumalo sa 50,000 kilo ng basura ang nakolektang basura sa Luneta Park.

Iginiit ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, ang gabundok na basurang iniwan ng mga bumisita at nagdiwang ng Pasko sa Luneta ay patimay na lamang ng kawalan ng disiplina ng mga Filipino at kawalan ng pakialam ng mga ito sa kapaligiran.

Aniya, dapat na maging responsable sa kanilang mga basura ang bawat isang bumibisita

sa mga pampulikong lugar.

Dagdag pa nito, hindi tamang iasa na lamang ng mga ito ang pagtapon at paglilinis sa kanilang mga iniwang basura sa mga garbage collector at street sweepers.

Pahayag pa ni Antiporda na dapat nang iwan ng mga Filipino ang bulok na kaisipan na mayroong maglilinis para sa kanila.

Samantala, hinikayat naman ni Antiporda ang lokal na opisyal ng pamahalaan na huwag mag-alinlangan na patawan ng parusa ang sinuman na mahuhuling nagkakat sa paligid.

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**Trashy after-effect** Similar to the Christmas eve bash, the 31 December festivities always leave heaps of garbage in its wake.

AL PADILLA (Illustration)



## DENR wants landfills in all 248 districts

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources aims to put up sanitary landfills in each of the country's 248 congressional districts to address solid waste management issues and achieve its "zero waste" goal.

In a press conference Wednesday, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the DENR will push to include P7.2 billion for the landfills in the agency's budget for 2021.

"One [sanitary landfill] per congressional district... P7.2 billion was not included in the 2020 [budget], hopefully in 2021 it will be included," he said.

Antiporda said putting up a sanitary landfill in every district was important because the number of waste facilities in the country is "not enough," but he admitted they are only a band-aid solution, as the desired waste-to-energy facilities are expensive.

"To really address the problem on solid waste, the DENR is calling for a concerted effort among local government units, lawmakers, and the public," Antiporda said.

Meanwhile, the DENR is calling on local government units to slap stiffer fines against those who will fail to segregate their garbage.

"Our proposal to the local government units is we encourage them to come up with ordinances that give a minimum of P1,000 [fine] for those who will not segregate their solid waste," Antiporda said. "We want people to feel the penalties so they can also 'feel' what they're doing to the environment."

The stiffer penalties to be imposed by LGUs will be on top of the P300 to P1,000 fine to be slapped against violators of the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, he said.

Urging LGUs to come up with stiffer penalties in their local ordinances is a faster way to address the "culture of indiscipline" on waste disposal than amending the Republic Act. No. 9003 or the Solid Waste Management law, the DENR official said.



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## DENR: Landfill sa 248 distrito susi sa zero waste

Upang makamit ang 'zero waste goal', itutulak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na maglagay ng sanitary landfill sa bawat 248 congressional district sa bansa.

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, isasama ng kagawaran ang P7.2 bilyong budget para sa 2021 upang gamiting pondo sa nasabing proyekto.

"Isasama namin at sana maisama sa budget para sa 2021 ang pagpapatayo ng sanitary landfills sa 248 districts. Itutulak namin ang pagkakaroon ng sanitary landfill bawat congressional district," ani Antiporda.

Ayon kay Antiporda, hindi nila naisama ang P7.2 bilyon nitong 2020 sa nasabing proyekto kaya umaasa siyang maihabol

ito sa 2021.

Binigyang-diin ni Antiporda na importanteng makapaglagay ng mga sanitary landfill sa bawat distrito dahil sa kakulangan ng pasilidad sa basura sa buong bansa.

Gayunman, inamin ni Antiporda na maituturing lamang na band-aid solution o pangtatal na solusyon lamang ang sanitary landfills dahil ang hinahangad nilang waste-to-energy facilities ay masyadong mahal.

Iginiit ni Antiporda na ang pinakasolusyon upang malutas ang problema sa mga basura, ay ang sama-samang pagsisikap ng mga lokal na pamahalaan, mga mambabatas at sambayanan.

Kasabay nito, hinikayat din ni

Antiporda ang mga local government unit na magpatupad ng mas mahigpit na multa ang mga ito sa mga lalabag sa garbage segregation.

Magugunitang una nang napaulat na ngayong 2020 ay mapupuno o aapaw na ang mga sanitary landfill na pinagtatapanan ng basura ng Metro Manila, na pinangangambahan ng DENR at mga lokal na pamahalaan.

Kaya unang tinitingnang solusyon ng DENR ay ang pagtatayo ng waste to energy facilities kung saan ang basura ay maaaring pagmulan ng kuryente, subalit nagkakahalaga umano ng mahigit kumulang sa P10 bilyon ang bawat makina nito. **(Dolly Cabreza)**



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## NEWS BRIEFS

### **DENR to LGUs: Segregate waste, punish litterers**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday called on local government units (LGUs) to strengthen the implementation of their local ordinances on solid waste management, particularly in penalizing those who litter and do not segregate their trash. Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, who oversees local government units and solid waste management, said they plan to coordinate with the Department of the Interior and Local Government to help LGUs with their garbage concerns. "Majority of cities and municipalities have local ordinances that are counterparts of the national law, but these have no teeth," he told a press briefing. He added that the penalties prescribed in the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, or Republic Act No. 9003, are very low.

—JHESSET O. ENANO



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NEW YEAR REVELRY

# TOXIC AIR GREET'S METRO FOLK IN YEAR'S FIRST DAWN

By **Jhesset O. Enano**  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Despite stricter regulations on firecracker use, hazardous and polluted air still engulfed several cities in Metro Manila on the first day of 2020.

Data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) showed dangerously high concentrations of particulate matter (PM), which are microscopic particles in the air that can cause serious health problems, at the peak of New Year revelries early Wednesday.

Air quality monitoring stations located across the metro recorded very high levels of both PM10 and PM2.5—particles finer than beach sand and human hair—between Tuesday midnight and 2 a.m. of Wednesday, when firecrackers and fireworks were booming in several cities.

Stations in the cities of Mandaluyong, Taguig and Caloocan recorded the highest levels of PM10, according to the DENR data.

The Mandaluyong station, located by the Plaza Hardin

Compound in Barangay Addition Hills, monitored a whopping 497 micrograms per normal cubic meter of air (ug/Ncm), while the station by the Technical University of the Philippines in Taguig registered 355 ug/Ncm.

**Healthy to very unhealthy**

Based on the air quality index for PM10, Mandaluyong's air during the peak of the New Year revelry turned "hazardous," while Taguig's air was considered "very unhealthy."

The Caloocan station, which can be found by the city hall compound, recorded 332 ug/Ncm, classified as "unhealthy."

Meanwhile, monitoring stations in Pateros, Las Piñas and Pasig monitored the highest concentrations of the smaller and deadlier PM2.5, which can easily enter the nose and throat and make its way to the lungs and even the circulatory system.

Pateros' station, located by the Pateros Elementary School Compound, registered 399 ug/Ncm, while stations in

Las Piñas and Pasig monitored 376 ug/Ncm and 367 ug/Ncm, respectively.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the high concentrations recorded in Pateros, metro's lone municipality, may have been due to the huge fireworks celebration in neighboring Taguig City.

Despite these alarming figures, however, data from DENR still cannot paint a full picture of the smoke and haze that enveloped the metropolis in the wee hours of the new year, since a majority of the air quality monitoring stations were unable to collect data, some for a number of years already.

**Less smoke, less trash**

Only nine out of 17 monitoring stations in Metro Manila were functioning to monitor PM10 levels. For PM2.5, only seven stations were able to monitor the particulate concentrations.

While some had broken down, others fell into disuse.

While the levels of air quality reached unhealthy

levels during the ringing in of the new year, the air in some areas gradually improved as the day passed, according to a separate monitoring by AirToday.ph.

The project monitors air quality through two stations in Quezon City.

In Edsa Muñoz, air quality was considered "very poor" by Tuesday midnight, but improved to "moderate" by 2 a.m. of Wednesday.

"Very poor" air quality was also recorded near LCP, which turned better to "moderate" by 3 a.m.

Based on AirToday.ph data, Quezon City enjoyed relatively cleaner air in the morning towards the afternoon.

Despite the polluted air in the start of 2020, Antiporda said this year's levels still marked significant improvement from 2016.

"Compared to the past few years, even just visually, you can see the difference," he said in a press briefing on Wednesday. "There is less smoke and also less trash from firecrackers on the streets." INQ



## 'Air in Metro hits hazardous level amid revelry'

By Rio N. Araja

THE quality of air in the National Capital Region has reached a "hazardous" level during the celebration of the 2020 New Year's celebration.

Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Unit

Concerns Benny Antiporda said Metro Manila's air quality reached a "very unhealthy" level from Dec. 31 at 11 p.m. until Jan. 1 at 2 a.m.

He blamed the chemical substances released by fireworks displays and firecracker use for the poor quality of air as the country wel-

comed the New Year.

Based on the data of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Mandaluyong City had the highest particulate matter, measured in microgram per cubic meter, at 497ug/nem.

*Next page*

### 'Air...

From A1

The other cities in Metro Manila that recorded a "hazardous" air quality were Pateros (399ug/nem), Las Piñas City (376ug/nem), Pasig City (367ug/nem), Taguig City (355ug/nem) and Caloocan City, particularly in its northern part. (332ug/nem).

Antiporda noted, however, that the air pollution was down this year against 2019's level.

He said there were fewer revelers who bought and used firecrackers this year, and that there were isolated rains in some parts of Metro Manila.

President Rodrigo Duterte, in 2017, issued Executive Order No. 28 regulating firecracker use would only be confined to community fireworks display "to minimize the risk of injuries and casualties."

Antiporda still advised the public to wear face masks at least for a day or two.



## ***Kalidad ng hangin noong New Year 'hazardous' – DENR***

Unhealthy at hazardous ang kalidad ng hangin sa ilang mga lugar sa National Capital Region sa pagsalubong ng mga Pilipino sa Bagong Taon.

Ito ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ay dulot ng kemikal mula sa mga fireworks displays at paggamit ng mga paputok ng publiko noong New Year.

Batay sa Air Quality index on particulate matter 10 micrometers (PM10) ng DENR, ang air quality sa Mandaluyong City ay hazardous (497 micrograms per cubic meter) at ang hangin sa Taguig City

ay unhealthy (355 micrograms per cubic meter), gayundin sa North Caloocan (332 micrograms per cubic meter).

Ang PM10 ay malalaking particles ng pollutants na maaaring masinghot ng mga tao habang ang PM2.5 ay mas delikado dahil ito ay mabilis magpunta sa baga ng tao.

Nakamonitor ang DENR ng PM2.5 high concentrations sa Pateros (399), Las Piñas (376), at Pasig (367).

Sinabi ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na bagama't may mga hazardous at unhealthy air quality ang

naitala ng ahensiya sa ilang lungsod sa Metro Manila, mas mababa naman ngayon ang air pollution dahil karamihan sa mga Pinoy ay hindi gumamit ng paputok sa pagsalubong sa Bagong Taon.

"Compared to the past few years... visual pa lang makikita mo na foggy na ang buong Metro Manila eh, nag-decrease kasi ang gumagamit ng paputok," pahayag ni Antiporda.

Una nang pinayuhan ni Antiporda ang mamamayan na gumamit ng mask para makaiwas sa pagsinghot ng pollutants mula sa mga paputok. *(Angie dela Cruz)*





## Polusyon sa Taguig, Mandaluyong matindi

Naitala sa mga lungsod ng Taguig at Mandaluyong ang pinakamatinding polusyon na naranasan sa pagsalubong sa Bagong Taon.

Sa datos na inilabas ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) nitong Miyerkoles, batay umano sa Air Quality Index para sa 'particulate matter 10 micrometers' o PM10, lumalabas na 'hazardous' ang hangin sa Mandaluyong habang 'unhealthy' naman sa Taguig.

Sa PM10 monitoring sa Mandaluyong, naitala ang 497 micrograms per cubic meter samantalang 355 micrograms per cubic meter sa Taguig.

Pangatlo ang Caloocan City sa nakapagtala ng 'unhealthy' na hangin dahil sa 332 micrograms per cubic

meter ng PM10 na na-monitor sa naturang lungsod.

Sa Taguig City pa rin, partikular sa Bonifacio Global City naitala ang pinakamakapal na usok dahil sa ginawang pinakamalaking countdown dito para salubugin ang Bagong Taon.

Tumaas umano ang antas ng polusyon mula alas-11:00 nang gabi (Disyembre 31) hanggang alas-dos nang madaling-araw nitong Enero 1, 2020.

"Mas mataas ang carbon dioxide ngayong taon kumpara sa pagsalubong ng New Year noong nakaraang taon dahil sinabayan ito ng malakas na pag-ulan sa Metro Manila, 'di tulad ngayong taon na naranasan lamang ang mga pag-ambon," paliwanag ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda. **(Dolly Cabreza)**



## Wish list: Maayos na tren, water supply, ginto, atbp

ILAN sa mga bagay na inaabangan natin ngayong 2020 ay mga sitwasyon na kahit papaano ay magpapagaan sa ating araw-araw na buhay. Narito ang ilan sa mga ito:

### 1. LRT2 maayos na

Kasunod ng pagkakasunog ng rectifier substation sa pagitan ng LRT Katipunan at Anonas stations noong Oct. 2018 na nakaapekto sa suplay ng kuryente, umaasa ang commute warriors na mapaikli ang siyam na buwang pagkukumpuni nito.

Sinabi ng pamunuan ng LRT-2 na aabutin pa hanggang Hulyo bago tuluyang mapagana ang nasirang linya ngunit ipinapanalangin ng mga pasahero na mas mapabilis ito lalo't daily struggle ang pagbiyahe ng walang tren.

Apektado sa pagkaka-kaantala ng biyaheng Santolan-Cubao ang mga pasahero mula eastern part ng Maynila gayundin ang kalapit lalawigan ng Rizal.

Sa ngayon, ang rulang Recto-Cubao vice versa pa lang ang fully operational.

### 2. One more chance sa motorcycle taxis

Unang sinabi ng multi-agency technical working group (TWG) na hanggang Mar. 23 na lang ang operasyon ng mga ito.

Simula ngayong Enero



hanggang sa nasabing pet-sa na lamang tatakbo ang mga bikes-for-hire dahil wala na umanong dahilan para palawigin pa ang pilot testing sa ikatlong pagkaka-taon, ayon sa TWG.

Kaya naman ipinanawagan ng mga commuters na huwag tanggalin ang mga motorsiklong nagsasalba sa kanila sa pagka-late sa trabaho dahil sa matinding trapik. Nagka-tensyon din sa pagitan ng Angkas at transport regulators kung saan inanunsyo ng nauna na mawawalan ng 17,000 riders sa bagong regulasyon ng huli.

Kasunod nito, pumasok sa eksena ang Joyride at Movelt na may tig-1,414 riders.

Sinabi ni TWG chair at Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) member Antonio Gardiola na maglalaras sila ng resulta ng kanil-

ang pag-aaral pagkatapos ng Marso.

### 3. Less aberya sa MRT

Hindi man perpekto, kahit papaano ay nakapagbigay ng magandang serbisyo ang pamunuan ng MRT-3 para sa ikagiginhawa ng pasahero. Mahaba pa rin ang pila ngunit kapansin-pansin na bumabalik na sa dating operasyon ang tren matapos ang sunod-sunod na aberya.

Naisaayos na rin ang mga sirang elevators, lumamig ang loob ng mga bagon dahil sa pagkukumpuni ng mga aircon at naging matagumpay ang test run ng Dalian trains. Matatandaang 48 Dalian trains mula China ang dinala rito sa Pilipinas noong 2015 subalit hindi gumana dahil sa compatibility issues nito sa railway ng MRT.

Bagaman sa July 2021 pa magiging fully operational

ang Dalian, looking forward pa rin ang train passengers na ito ang simula ng mas less-hassle na pagsakay sa MRT ngayong taon.

### 4. Rehabilitation ng ibang isla

Nauna ang Boracay at sinundan ng Manila Bay, nasa wishlist hindi lang ng environment advocates kundi maging ng buong bayan na malinis at maibalik sa dating itsura ang karamihan sa mga isla sa Pilipinas.

Dahil sa bugso ng local at foreign tourists hindi napigilan ang pagdumi at pagtatapon ng basura kung saan-saan. Nariyan pa nga ang viral dugyot video ng isang Chinese tourist na pinadumi ang kanyang anak sa dagat.

Upang mapanumbalik ang halina, target ng Department of Tourism at Department of Natural Resources na isunod na ipasara upang linisin ang Coron at El Nido sa Palawan, Siargao at Puerto Galera.

### 5. Wala nang water crisis

Ang sigaw ni Juan, sana'y wala na raw problema sa tubig. Summer last year nang tamaan ng delubyo ang Metro Manila at ilang probinsya matapos kapusin sa suplay ng tubig ang Manila Water at Maynilad kung saan 10,000 households ang apektado.

Pila kung pila saan mang sulok na may rasyon ng tubig ang mga Pinoy. Si nanay sa loob ng bahay, todo tipid din ng tubig para may pampaligo ang buong pamilya.

Bumaba sa critically low level ang La Mesa Dam, ang pangunahing reservoir ng tubig na siyang nagsusuplay sa Metro Manila. Sa pagpasok ng bagon taon, hiling ng bawat isa na masolusyunan ang sulirain sa tubig na importanteng gamit sa pang araw-araw.

### 6. First gold ng Pinas sa Olympics

May 96 taon na magmula nang lumahok ang Pilipinas sa Olympics pero wala pa itong napapanalunang gintong medalya dito.

Ngayong taon nakatakdang ang Tokyo Olympics at umaasa ang bansa na dito ay makakakuha na ng ginto ang Pilipinas.

Dalawang atleta pa lang sa katauhan nina El Obiena ng pole vault at Carlos Yulo ng gymnastics ang kwalipikado sa quadrennial sporting event. Nakikita ng sports officials na malaki ang tsansa nila na masungkit ang ginto sa kani-kanilang sports.

Target ng Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) na makapagpadala ng 20 atleta sa Tokyo. - **Dennis Christian Hilanga**



YEAR-ENDER

# 2019 'historic' year for MWSS and water concessionaires

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLORE

**W**hat former president of Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWC) said a few months ago has turned out to be a forewarning.

In July, he said that 2019 was looking to be a historical year for his company and fellow Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. So historical year is exactly what they got, especially upon finding out that their concession agreements with the government will no longer last until 2037 and that they only have two years to fulfill their water service obligations.

Several times this year, President Rodrigo Duterte has showered MWSS and its concessionaires with verbal onslaught as they failed to quench Manila's thirst.

His worst outbursts came as Manila Water announced that it had won an arbitration case it filed against the Philippine government before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).

If honored, the international court's decision would have allowed the Ayala-led company to collect ₱7.39 billion from the government.

This infuriated Duterte, who accused Manila Water and Maynilad of "economic sabotage" and calling out its respective owners for "screwing" the Filipino people for staging a water crisis to jack up rates.

Manila Water is owned by the Ayala Group, while Maynilad is a joint venture between Manuel V. Pangilinan-led Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC) and DMCI Holdings, Inc. (DMCI) of the Consuji family.

To recall, Maynilad had also separately filed a case against the Philippine government over water rate adjustment a few years ago. The same court, PCA, also ruled in favor of the water utility and ordered the government to pay it

But to appease Duterte, both Maynilad and Manila Water told the lawmakers days before Congress went on recess that they will no longer collect their respective indemnification, which stood nearly ₱11 billion combined.

"It's really a new era," said former Manila Water President Ferdinand Dela Cruz, who resigned in August.

Home to more than 12 million people, Metro Manila gets its water supply from the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system.

The 52-year-old Angat Dam currently supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs, releasing about 4 million liters of water per day (mld), while La Mesa Dam is supposed to serve as Manila

Water's reserve.

Sometime in July, both dams almost ran out of water, forcing Manila Water and Maynilad to implement rotational water service interruption.

As this happened, Dela Cruz said it was the first time that both Angat Dam and La Mesa Dam actually reached their critical water level at the same time. He blamed this to climate change, rising demand, and the delay of new water sources.

Of the Angat Dam allocation, Manila Water gets an allocation of 1,600 mld, while Maynilad Water Services, Inc. is allowed to get the rest or about 2,400 mld.

To recall, Angat Dam also had its lowest water level in 2010, but Manila Water didn't have to implement water supply interruption since there was enough water from La Mesa Dam at that time.

### Root cause of the problem

Duterte first expressed his animosity towards Maynilad and Manila Water in March when the latter's customers experienced low to no water supply for several days, something that has triggered public outrage.

Then another water shortage happened again in October, affect-

The dams are simply not just getting enough water due to lack of rains. And there are not enough water sources to compensate for it.

"It's the root cause of the problem. If we will not have a new water source, there is always going to be a problem," Manila Water Board Director Antonino Aquino said in the last congressional hearing on water supply and distribution deals.

Aquino was supposed to have retired already years ago, but the word on the street is that as early as March, when Manila Water experienced its first major water crisis, he was asked by the Ayala Group to come out of retirement.

It was in 2014 when Aquino retired from the Ayala Group after 34 years. During those years, he had had successfully led Manila Water and then later on Ayala family's giant property arm Ayala Land, Inc.

Again, it was a historical year for the company, as Dela Cruz had put it.

Dela Cruz was actually the first one who sounded the alarm of a looming water crisis. He also warned about rotational water service interruption being the new normal as Metro Manila's existing water sources could no longer keep up with the growing population and its rising demand.

"For the balance of the year, what we will have to deal with is continuous rotational interrup-

tion. What we really have to plan is the next summer in 2020," Dela Cruz said.

In a congress hearing, Bayan Muna Representative Ferdinand Gaité asked Aquino and Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito Fernandez if the "rationing of water will happen until forever" and both officials said yes but only until a new dam or a new water source goes online.

It was in the 1990s when Manila Water and Maynilad entered into a concession agreement with



2019 'historic' year for MWSS and water concessionaires

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Dela Cruz pointed out that when these deals were signed, the government promised that there will be a new major water source over the next 10 years, something that didn't happen even 22 years later.

Right now, the Duterte Administration is pushing for the Kaliwa Dam project as the biggest solution to the problem.

**Kaliwa project goes left**

The problem about the Kaliwa Dam is it is too controversial.

Part of the New Centennial Water Source Project (NCWSP), the P12-billion Kaliwa Dam is located along the provinces of Rizal and Quezon and would have a storage capacity of 600 mld.

From being a Public and Private Partnership (PPP) project, the government sometime in 2017 ordered the shift in financing for the NCWSP and awarded it to China under an Official Development Assistance (ODA) scheme. It will now be developed by China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC).

It's been more than two years since the Duterte Administration first attempted to get the project started, but it just wouldn't.

Environment groups and local government units think the project, which involves the construction of a massive dam within ancestral lands, is too destructive and would cause negative environmental impacts like flooding.

As far as the people is concerned, it is feared that a lot of Indigenous People (IP) communities will be displaced because of the project.

It is for this reason why the project still isn't moving, even after securing its much sought Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

**Onerous provisions**

Onerous has already become a buzzword. Lately it's so hard to hear this word and not think about the provisions of the concession agreements of MWSS with Maynilad and Manila Water.

In his most recent tirades, Duterte particularly attacked Maynilad and Manila Water for their

"onerous" deals with the MWSS. He said it almost every day.

According to him, a lot of provisions in the concession agreements of these companies are disadvantageous to the country, especially that specific provision that the government can't interfere in the setting of water rates.

The deals also allow Maynilad and Manila Water to ask for indemnity for possible losses in the event of such government interference.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said that because of these provisions, the PCA ruled in favor of both companies.

In a hearing, Bayan Muna party-list Representative Carlos Zarate questioned the companies' officials if they are willing to let go of these supposedly onerous provisions in their existing contracts with the government.

They haven't discussed it yet with MWSS, Aquino responded.

Zarate fears that if the aforementioned provisions are not stripped off the concession deals, the water utilities may still be able to pursue the same case against the government once a new administration takes over.

He raised the question after the two companies waived their respective arbitral award.

**From 2037, back to 2022**

The worst for Maynilad and Manila Water happened when MWSS suddenly cancelled the extension of its concession agreements with these companies.

As a result, both companies will only be allowed to distribute water in Metro Manila until 2022, instead of 2037 as per their extended contracts approved by the Arroyo administration. Fernandez and Aquino both warned about the decision's financial consequences such as exorbitant water rate increase.



## Angat Dam's water level rises amid monsoon rains

By RAMON EFREN LAZARO

MALOLOS – The water elevation in Angat Dam continued to rise yesterday due to rains spawned by the northeast monsoon.

The Bulacan provincial disaster risk reduction and management office (PDRRMO) said the dam's water level was at 201.72 meters as of 8 a.m. yesterday, an increase of .21 meters compared to Tuesday.

The PDRRMO said Metro Manila and the rest of the country were forecast to have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rains and thunderstorms yesterday.

Angat Dam is the primary source of potable water

of Metro Manila residents and irrigation of Bulacan and Pampanga farms.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said reduced allocation for Metro Manila consumers would be maintained unless the water level in Angat Dam reaches its ideal mark of 212 meters.

The NWRB said this means rotational water service interruption might continue to be implemented.

Water for irrigation will remain at 10 cubic meters per second compared to the normal allocation of 40 cms, it added.

Meanwhile, the water elevation in Ipo and Bustos dams remain at 101.05 meters and 16.03 meters, respectively, yesterday.



## Water service interruptions in MM may continue – NWRB

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Water supply interruptions in Metro Manila are feared to continue until the dry season this year, with Angat Dam failing to reach its end-of-year normal high water level of 212 meters in 2019.

The water level of Angat Dam continued to gradually increase due to some rains since last month, but its current level is below the 212-meter target by end of 2019.

Based on the latest monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Angat Dam's water level was slightly up from 201.51 meters last Tuesday to 201.71 meters on Wednesday.

National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Sevilla David Jr. said they are still managing water releases by not giving the normal allocation.

NWRB continued to allocate 40 cubic meters per second (cms) or 3,450 million liters per day (MLD) of raw water to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) for distribution to water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water this month. This is still lower than the normal allocation for domestic use of 46-48 cms.

MWSS has been allocated 40 cms of raw water since September 1, 2019.

The availability of sufficient water for domestic and irrigation uses until the dry season of 2020 is crucial with the Angat Dam failing to reach its desired level in 2019.

Dry season in the Philippines is usually from December to May.

David earlier pointed out the possibility of water supply interruptions for domestic use coming from Angat Dam. This is due to current reduction in water allocation to make sure that there will be enough water until the next "habagat" or rainy season in June.

Maynilad and Manila Water currently serves about 16.5 million consumers in Metro Manila and some parts of Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, and Bulacan.

Several areas in Metro Manila and nearby provinces have been experiencing water service disruptions since October 24, 2019 owing to Angat Dam's lower-than-usual water level.

To augment water source at Angat Dam in case it is needed, David said NWRB will be tapping some deep wells within Metro Manila. Cloud seeding operations are also on standby, he added.



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**BIRD OF PREY** Sightings of the critically endangered Philippine eagle have been reported in several provinces in Mindanao, like Sarangani, prompting local officials to push for the protection of the island's forests, the bird of prey's habitat. —DWILLSON

CONSERVING HABITAT OF NATIONAL BIRD

## PROTECTION SOUGHT FOR SARANGANI'S MT. BUSA TO SAVE PH EAGLE

**GENERAL SANTOS CITY—**The presence of the critically endangered Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) in Sarangani province has prompted local officials to seek the declaration of Mt. Busa as a protected landscape.

Lawyer Ryan Ramos, chief of staff of Sarangani Rep. Ruel Pacquiao, said they initiated talks with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to conserve Mt. Busa after a raptor was rescued recently at a portion of Celebes Sea in Maasim town. It was the second Philippine eagle rescued in the province after almost three years.

"We want Mt. Busa placed under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (Enipas) to protect the Philippine eagles and their habitat," Ramos said in a statement.

Alejandra Sison, municipal environment and natural resources officer of Maasim, said members of the Kamal family retrieved from the Celebes Sea a 5.2-kilogram female Philippine eagle on Dec. 13.

**Endangered species**

The rescue has again trained a spotlight on the health of the endangered bird's habitat in the province.

Veterinarian Roy Mejo-rada, program manager of the Sarangani Environmental Conservation and Protection Center (ECPC), said the eagle could have only come from the forests of Mt. Busa, which straddles the towns of Maasim, Kiamba and Maitum.

The 114,000-hectare Mt. Busa has been a known habitat of Philippine eagles and other endangered and threatened species like tarsiers, wild deer, wild boars, bats, monkeys and civets.

The highest peak in Sarangani at 2,064 meters above sea level, Mt. Busa was declared a

key biodiversity and important bird area in 2001.

Cornelio Ramirez Jr., ECPC executive director, said land conversion, *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming), wildlife hunting, illegal logging and mining had been threatening Mt. Busa, hence the need to declare it as a protected landscape.

**Saved from drowning**

The mature eagle was found in a banca moored in a buoy at least a 100 meters away from the shoreline of Barangay Lumatil in Maasim.

Iyad Kamal, one of the three fishers who rescued the eagle,

said the bird had been there for about three days. In the afternoon of Dec. 13, Kamal said they noticed the bird leaping from the banca, heading toward the forest, but it landed on the water.

"I thought she was catching fish since she did not soar high. When she fell, she was not able to fly again," Kamal said.

Afraid the bird might drown, Kamal and fellow fishers Ryan Molod and Arsi Kamal boarded a banca to rescue the eagle.

Mejorada said when the fishermen realized the bird looked like a Philippine eagle, they reported their find to vil-

lage officials who, in turn, alerted Sison.

Overnight, Sison kept the bird "like a baby" in her house, while awaiting its transfer to the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) facility in Davao City, where the bird would recuperate.

The eagle, according to Mejorada, weighed 5.18 kg and has a wingspan of about a meter.

The PEF, in a statement, said the presence of the Philippine eagle in Sarangani's mountains showed that Mt. Busa was "still pristine and healthy, and is worth conserving." —BONG S. SARMIENTO AND EDWIN O. HERNANDEZ/INQ



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## MORE VOICES

### SAVING OUR ANIMALS CAN SAVE OUR FUTURE

THE Philippines, composed of more than 7,000 islands, is also home to more than 50,000 different species that reside in our lands and waters, and more than 100 million people all over, from our cities to our mountains. Our lands also hold the highest levels of discovery when it comes to mammals in the past few years—a reminder that all we know may not be all we have. There's so much more to discover.

So rich in life, in resources, in flora and fauna, from the famous Philippine tarsiers in Bohol to the lesser known Visayan warty pigs in Bacolod, we have so much to treasure. Yet, we seem to miss out on protecting our endemic species. Deforestation due to illegal logging, the mismanagement of our lands, corruption by people in power, and the greed of ordinary people who are willing to

destroy our home for money are some of the main reasons our animals suffer habitat loss, losing their homes along with their food and, eventually, their lives.

The poverty of our lands not only affects our endemic wildlife, but also our brothers and sisters who reside in these areas. The destruction of nature takes away opportunities for growth, whether in agriculture or culture. I've seen this first-hand in our reforestation efforts in Zambales—how restoring the homes of indigenous people can let them thrive. The indigenous community we work with in Zambales has since started creating music once again, alongside planting trees in their ancestral lands. It's clear that when people don't have to worry about surviving, they can focus on prospering.

There is still time to

change the stakes, both for our people and for the lives that are in our care. We shouldn't let the few who dedicate their lives to conservation work be the only ones fighting for the future of our country—and we shouldn't let these efforts be seen as extraordinary. This kind of work should be the norm and the standard for everyone concerned about the state of our country's environment.

What makes us human should extend to more than thinking of ourselves. When we start to think of others, especially those without a voice, we can start to imagine a Philippines that thrives. When we protect our home by restoring our lands, we protect our animals and our people, too.

ISSA BARTE,  
founder, Fund The Forest,  
louissabarte@gmail.com





# 75 turtle hatchlings released in Subic

**SUBIC BAY FREEPORT:** Seventy-five newly hatched marine turtles slowly crawled their way to the shores of All Hands Beach here on Friday night to begin their perilous journey back to their natural habitat.

The 75 marine turtle hatchlings, belonging to the olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) variety, were the latest batch of baby turtles released from the nesting site here, that now counts a total of 5,449 baby turtles nurtured and released back to the sea since 2011.

Nick Robles, a staff at the All Hands Beach in charge of the nesting site, told *The Manila Times* the sea turtles, more popularly known as *pawikan*, have been regularly coming to the shores of the beach particularly during the last quarter of the year to lay eggs.

Robles noted the turtles' ability to trace back where they came from.

According to him, the management of the beach designated an area as a nesting site where the turtle eggs are taken care of until they are hatched and then released back to the sea.

The nesting site is officially recognized by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The Subic Bay Metropolitan



**BON VOYAGE** Newly hatched *pawikan* (marine turtles) crawl on the sand toward the sea where they begin their perilous journey to their natural habitat. PHOTO BY PATRICK ROXAS

Authority's Ecology Center and the Philippine National Police's Maritime Group, in the meantime, has joined All Hands Beach in its efforts to protect and conserve the sea turtles, whose numbers are dwindling.

Aside from the nesting site for the *pawikan*, the popular beach resort, in partnership with government and nongovernment organizations, has also allowed the use of its property for the artificial propagation of coral reefs.

Experts had identified the beach resort area to possess the ideal water conditions for the

conservation and propagation of coral reefs.

Before the release of the hatchlings, beach-goers and guests, including children, were briefed about the endangered *pawikan*, especially on the very small chance of their survival once at sea, where predators abound and their chances of survival are only about 1 percent and have now become more difficult with more turtle deaths caused by ingesting sea trash or plastics

that these turtles mistake for jellyfish.

Marine turtles normally come to the resort's shores to lay their eggs during the months of October to December and it takes about 50 to 60 days for the eggs to hatch.



# Madrid climate talks crashed over Green

## Climate Fund

in Madrid — but UN did at least agree on a 'gender action plan' and 'gender-responsive climate action.'"

### 'Climate emergency' chosen as word of the year

Climate alarmists can console themselves with at least this thought: "Climate emergency" has been chosen as the word of the year in 2019 by Oxford Dictionaries.

Valerie Richardson of the *Washington Times* was the first to report this development on

Nov. 21, 2019. She wrote:

"Sticklers will note that it's actually two words, but 'climate emergency' has been chosen as the 'word of the year' by Oxford Dictionaries, which cited a hundred-fold increase in the term's usage.

"Analysis of language data collected in the Oxford corpus shows the rapid rise of climate emergency from relative obscurity to becoming one of the most prominent — and prominently debated — terms of 2019," said the dictionary-maker, part of Oxford

University Press, in a statement.

"The definition of 'climate emergency,' a phrase embraced this year by environmental groups and media outlets, is 'a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.'

"Oxford Dictionaries found that the use of the phrase 'increased steeply over the course of 2019, and by September it was more than 100 times as common as it had been the previous year,' soaring by

10,796 percent from 2018.

"This data is significant because it indicates a growing shift in people's language choice in 2019, a conscious intensification that challenges accepted language use to reframe discussion of 'the defining issue of our time' with a new gravity and greater immediacy," said the OD statement.

"One reason cited for this year's prominence of 'climate emergency' is the [UK] *Guardian's* decision in May to update its stylebook preference from 'climate change' to 'climate emergency, crisis or break-

down' to describe 'the broader impact of climate change.'

"The move prompted other media outlets to review and update their own policies and approaches to reporting on the climate," said Oxford Dictionaries.

"That decision by the left-of-center newspaper was cheered by activists but decried by skeptics, who accused the publication of seeking to hype the climate-catastrophe narrative with a loaded term.

"The term 'climate emergency' is beyond parody," said Climate

Depot's Marc Morano. 'It is simply a lobbying campaign by the media, academia and activist scientists who are trying to instill even more fear about alleged global warming. I think the phrase will ultimately hurt climate activists because it is so over the top that people know instinctively they're being lobbied.'

"He noted that the phrase dates as far back as 2005, when Barbra Streisand used it in an interview with ABC's Diane Sawyer."

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# Madrid climate talks crashed over Green Climate Fund

## First word

**N**OW it can be told. COP25 in Madrid from Dec. 2 to 13, 2019 collapsed because of the issue of climate finance, and specifically the challenge of raising the money for the ambitious Green Climate Fund (GCF). The countries and delegates could not agree on how to move forward on the issue. In the end, the conference decided to kick the can down the road — to the next conference of the parties, which is set in Glasgow, Scotland in 2020.

When the COP25 climate conference ended on December 13, most of the top guns of the US press like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* barely took notice. They went silent on what happened at the conference and why the talks failed.

Only the *Washington Times* diligently reported on what was going on at the conference and why it was deadlocked at the end.

Valerie Richardson of the *Washington Times* did a full report on why COP25 was such a failure.

At the heart of it all, she reported, was disagreement among the nations on the issue of climate finance, especially the challenge of raising annually the highly ambitious \$100-billion GCF.

This is the fund that enticed many developing countries, including the Philippines, to sign the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015.



## OBSERVER

**YEN  
MAKABENTA**

The GCF was designed to assist developing countries in adopting policies of mitigation and adaptation to cope with climate change.

With then-President Benigno Aquino 3rd present in Paris, the Philippines enthusiastically signed the Paris accord and committed the nation to a policy of reducing its carbon footprint.

Here is Ms. Richardson's report on COP25, and why it fell short of its ambitious goal:

"Even the star-studded presence of Greta Thunberg and Harrison Ford couldn't save the UN climate change conference.

"The annual climate fest was widely panned as a failure after wrapping up Sunday with no agreement on hot-button issues such as the Green Climate Fund, 'an international carbon market, 'common metrics' for measuring non-CO2 emissions, and reimbursement to poorer nations for 'loss and damage caused by man-made climate change.'

"I am disappointed with the results of COP25," tweeted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, referring to the conference's official name, the 25th Conference of the Parties

"After two weeks, delegates from about 200 countries could only agree that there is an 'urgent need' to cut greenhouse-gas emissions to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris agreement, despite pressure from activists who swarmed the Madrid gathering.

"The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation and finance to tackle the climate crisis," Mr. Guterres said. 'But we must not give up, and I will not give up.'

"Those tricky issues will be pushed next year to COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, but skeptics said there's no reason to believe developed nations will adhere to a pledge to sink \$100 billion into a fund to help developing countries adapt to climate change.

"The failure of COP25 to agree on the thorny issue of climate finance doesn't come as a surprise. In fact, we have been predicting this decade-old stalemate to continue," said Benny Peiser, director of the Global Warming Policy Forum in London, calling it 'highly unlikely that the \$100-billion deadlock can be overcome.'

"In a tweet, Cuban diplomat Bruno Rodriguez blamed a 'lack of political will of industrialized countries. They try to put the burden on developing countries. Capitalism is unsustainable. Human species is faced with the risk of extinction.'

"Meanwhile, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a supporter of President Trump, took a dig at the international community for its criticism over annual fires in the Amazon.

"I'd like to know: Has there been a resolution for Europe to be reforested, or are they just going to keep bothering Brazil?" he asked, as reported by the BBC.

"Not surprisingly, the Trump administration was blamed in part for the conference's failure after the US delegation was accused of blocking language on liability for climate 'loss and damage.' The US is also scheduled to exit the Paris agreement in 11 months.

"If the United States is not backing an agreement that is meaningful it is extraordinarily difficult for the rest of the world to come to an agreement," said Sir David King, a British representative.

"The conference, which began December 2, notched a few smaller victories, including adopting a five-year 'gender action plan,' which seeks to 'advance knowledge and understanding of gender-responsive climate action.'

"Not a few climate skeptics welcomed the failure of the Madrid conference.

"Mark Morano of Climate Depot tweeted this comment:

"Great news for science and humanity: UN climate talks collapse

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# Global warming disasters cost \$1-B

Extreme weather, fueled by climate change, struck every corner of the globe in 2019. From Southern Africa to North America and from Australia and Asia to Europe, floods, storms and fires brought chaos and destruction

PARIS, France (AFP) — At least 15 natural disasters linked to climate change this year caused damage of over \$1 billion and seven of them cost at least \$10 billion, British charity Christian Aid.

This year is set to be the second hottest year in history and each of the disasters in the report has a link with climate change, Christian Aid added.

“Extreme weather, fueled by climate

change, struck every corner of the globe in 2019. From Southern Africa to North America and from Australia and Asia to Europe, floods, storms and fires brought chaos and destruction,” it said.

Assembling its report from official figures, estimates by the nongovernment organization and aid bodies, scientific studies and media reports, the British charity said the disasters displaced millions and caused widespread deaths.

Seven of them

caused damage of more than \$10 billion (9 billion euros).

These included the floods that ravaged north India, typhoon “Lekima” in China, Hurricane “Dorian” in the United States, floods in China, floods in the Midwest and southern United States, typhoon “Hagibis” in Japan and the California wildfires, the costliest tragedy at \$25 billion.

“These figures are likely to be underestimates as they often

show only insured losses and do not always take into account other financial costs, such as lost productivity and uninsured losses,” it said.

Christian Aid said the overwhelming majority of deaths were caused by just two events, in India and southern Africa, which called it “a reflection of how the world’s poorest people pay the heaviest price for the consequences of climate change.

“In contrast, the financial cost was greatest in richer countries: Japan and the United States suffered three of the four most costly events.”

Greenhouse gas emissions are once again set to rise in 2019 after hitting a record in 2018, as extreme weather events — made more likely as the planet warms — struck seemingly everywhere this year.

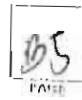
These include Cyclone “Idai” in

Mozambique, typhoon “Hagibis” in Japan, a deadly, record breaking heatwave across much of Europe, wildfires in California and eastern Australia and floods in Venice.

The threat posed by climate change became so stark in 2019 that Indonesia, one of the fastest-growing economies on Earth, decided to move its capital to somewhere that wasn’t sinking.

“Unless urgent action is taken to reduce emissions, global temperatures will rise at least another 0.5°C over the next 20 years, and another 2-3°C by the end of the century,” Christian Aid said.

“The world’s weather will continue to become ever-more extreme and people around the world will continue to pay the price. The challenge ahead is to minimize the impacts through deep and rapid emissions cuts.”



## Mobile technologies help reduce carbon emissions and address climate change

THE mobile industry is one of many key sectors playing a crucial role in addressing the challenge of climate change. While Globe and other telecom operators outside the country already committed to reducing their own carbon emissions, they also contribute significantly to the reduction of carbon emissions by other industries through connectivity and behavior change.

A new GSMA report produced in collaboration with The Carbon Trust, an independent sustainability specialist, assessed the enablement impact of mobile communication technology at a global scale. It showed that the use of mobile technology enabled a global reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions of around 2,135 million tonnes carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2018. The emissions savings were almost ten times greater than the global carbon footprint of the mobile industry itself.

Yoly Crisanto, Globe Chief Sustainability Officer said, "The impact of mobile technologies in response to climate change, encourages innovation and hastens the digital transformation of



industries and nations."

"As we venture further into the 4th Industrial Revolution, Globe redoubles its efforts to deepen the adoption of existing and emerging mobile technologies such as data connectivity, cloud computing, Artificial Intelligence and IoT for good," she added.

Globe recently became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact, showing its strong commitment to implement universal sustainability principles.

As part of Singtel Group, Globe joined more than 50 mobile operators from all over the world in a major GSMA-led initiative to develop a mobile industry climate action roadmap that will create a decarbonization pathway for the mobile sector by February next year. The end-goal is to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 to reduce the risks and harmful effects of climate change.



# Locals as allies in responsible mining

Moving forward, our goal is to harness the mineral wealth for progress and development and the key to that is responsible mining

By **Maria Romero**  
@tribunephi\_mbr

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), vow to reinvigorate and strengthen the nationwide campaign against irresponsible mining in the country.

As part of the drive to ensure the mining industry will not harm the environment, the DENR launched a project dubbed #MineResponsibility to create a clearer and more factual image of the mining industry in the Philippines.

The campaign also aims to inform the general public about mining and its benefits to Philippine

society, to address misconceptions about the mining industry, and to make citizens allies in ensuring responsible mining.

"We now have better and stronger policies in place to protect the environment and local communities and to mine with a long-term positive effect. We should not be wasting the massive mineral wealth of the Philippines when it can be used to benefit the people," Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu was quoted earlier.

"Moving forward, our goal is to harness the mineral wealth for progress and development and the key to that is responsible mining," he added.

MGB Director Wilfredo Moncano emphasized the information campaign aims to promote

an inclusive approach ensuring the mining industry's commitment to the protection of people and the environment.

"It is important that the public is informed and involved in the enforcement of mining policies and environmental protection, and that's what this campaign is really about," Moncano said.

He also said mining requirements are more strict now than they were twenty years ago.

The efforts to strengthen environmental and community protection began with the founding of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC), the purpose of which was to serve as the third-party in auditing the large-scale mining operations of certain companies.

To address the deficiencies and issues discovered in the MICC audit, the DENR instituted Department Administrative Order 2018-19 (DAO 2018-19) where restrictions ensure

responsible mining rules were observed closely.

Among these was the reduction of the maximum disturbed area for large-scale mining operations, or the area that an operation can disturb and must begin rehabilitating before expanding operations to another area.

Alongside the MICC audit and DAO 2018-19, the MGB also began an initiative expediting the license application of small-scale mining groups to legitimize them and encourage them to join the Minahang Bayan in their local communities and areas.

Under the People's Small-Scale Mining Act, Minahang Bayan is a cooperative of small-scale mines operating as one unit.

According to Moncano, strengthening the enforcement of environmental protection policies related to small-scale mining require a more collaborative approach.



ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu hopes to enlist the cooperation of local residents in guarding the country's resources as shield against irresponsible miners.



## Stateland Inc. conducts tree planting activity



STATELAND, Inc. conducted a tree planting activity simultaneously with its mother company, Suntrust Properties, Inc. on Dec.

23, in Batangas City. For its part, 400 fruit-bearing seedlings were planted in the hopes of a more sustainable world to live in for

the future generations. Suntrust management and employees were joined today by DENR-Community Environment and

Natural Resources Office of Lipa representatives Jun Macalintal, Raul Perez, Rolando Delas Alas, and Adonis Magpantay.



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU**  
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Dikman Cuzon City 1116  
Telephone Nos.: (632) 927-1517, 928-3725; Fax No.: (632) 920-2258  
Website: <http://www.emb.gov.ph>

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

On the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) of the proposed **DANAO MINING PROJECT** of the **CITADEL MINING CORPORATION** located in **BARANGAYS CABUNGAHAN, MANLAYAG, STA. ROSA AND GUINACOT, DANAO CITY, CEBU.**

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed **DANAO MINING PROJECT** to attend a Public Hearing on **17 JANUARY 2020 (FRIDAY)** at **9:00 AM** (*registration starts at 8:30 AM*) to be held in the **DANAO COCO PALMS RESORT, KM 31, NORTH NATIONAL HIGHWAY, BARANGAY SABANG, DANAO CITY, CEBU.**

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with Citadel Mining Corporation's application for its Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC). The EIS of the aforementioned project is being reviewed by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

Proponent	Citadel Mining Corporation
Project Name	Danao Mining Project
Project Location	Barangays Cabungahan, Manlayag, Sta. Rosa and Guinacot, Danao City, Cebu
Project Area	179.13 hectares out of the total 336.3782 hectares covered by the MPSA
Proposed Extraction Rate	350,000 MTPY

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should preferably confirm their attendance/participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper to the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD) of this Office through mail or through email at [eiamd.emb.co@gmail.com](mailto:eiamd.emb.co@gmail.com), three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The project's EIS and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable at our website: [www.eia.emb.gov.ph](http://www.eia.emb.gov.ph) (*kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/ Consultation link found in our website*) while copies will be available in this Office and in the following offices:

- 1) EMB Region VII**  
Address: DENR Compound, Greenplains Subd., Banilad, Mandaue City  
(032) 260 9777
- 2) City Planning and Development Officer**  
Danao City Hall, F. Ralota Street, Poblacion, 6004, Danao City, Cebu  
(+63 32) 411 0100 loc 1511, 1512, 2301

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 920- 2240 to 41 and look for the project case handlers Engr. Carlo Vic Arida, EnP and Engr. George Silvederio.

*Protect the environment... Protect life...*