

DATE : 03-18-20

DAY : SATURDAY

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



HORNBILL RESCUED FROM TAAL ERUPTION: Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary for solid waste management and local government units concerns Benny Antiporda (right) turns over to assistant secretary and concurrent Biodiversity Management Bureau director Ricardo Calderon (second from left) a Rufous Hornbill (*Buceros hydrocorax*) commonly known as *kalaw* was rescued from Cavite by a member of the Cavite Educators Lions Club during the eruption of Taal Volcano last Jan. 12. The bird, entrusted to Antiporda for proper turnover to BMB, is an endangered species endemic to the Philippines and is found in the country's protected areas. Also in photo is BMB veterinarian Dr. Esteven Toledo.



DENR ORDER

5-HECTARE DAGUPAN DUMP SHUT DOWN FOR REHAB

DAGUPAN CITY—The 60-year-old garbage dump here was shut down on Thursday as the local government began rehabilitating it following a closure order from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

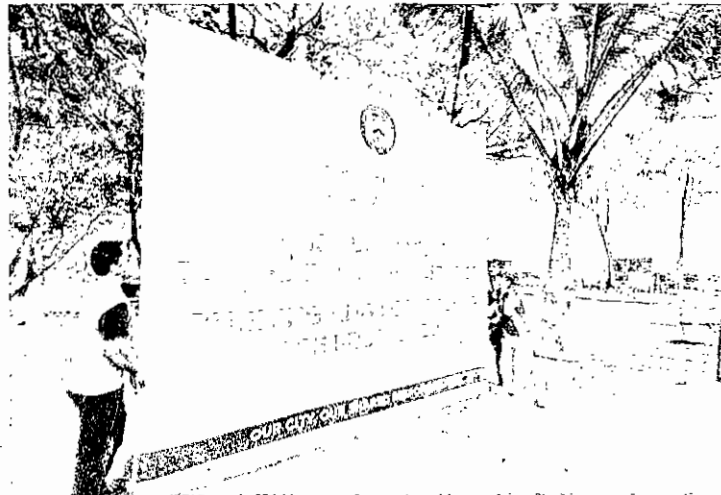
Mayor Brian Lim said the DENR had given the city government six months to haul the dump's residual wastes to a sanitary landfill.

Open dumps banned

"This administration is serious in rehabilitating the [dump]," he said in a statement.

Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, bans open dumps in the country.

Lim said the DENR had ordered the city government in 2017 to stop operating the dump at Barangay Bonuan Boquig but the previous administration defied the order and



CLEANUP The Dagupan City dump at Barangay Bonuan Binloc is due to undergo further improvements. —DAGUPAN CITY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE / CONTRIBUTOR

continued to operate it.

The mayor, who met with DENR regional officials last month, said his administration would comply with the department's rehabilitation and

closure plan for the 5-hectare open dump.

"We want to do it because from the start, our goal is to be able to rehabilitate and close the [dump]," Lim said.

Maria Dorica Naz-Hipe, Environmental Management Bureau director in the Ilocos Region, said the city government will find a third party to transfer the garbage to a sanitary landfill within the six-month deadline.

Natural drainage

Lim said the dump's rehabilitation would include removing makeshift structures in the area, preventing water from accumulating and promoting natural drainage.

He said the dump will also be covered with soil to prevent water from getting into the waste pile during the rehabilitation.

Teddy Villamil, the city government's waste management consultant, said they would operate a materials recovery facility inside the dump for waste recycling and composting. —YOLANDA SOTELO INQ



DENR nilibre ang pagpasok sa Bohol man-made forest



Libre nang makakapasyal ang mga turista sa kilalang man-made forest sa Bohol province dahil sinuspinde ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pangongolekta ng entrance fee rito.

Ayon kay Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Charlie Fabre, ipina-hold niya ang fee collection dahil pag-uusapan pa ang hinggil dito ng mga Capitol official at stakeholder sa tourism industry.

Maaari umanong tumagal ng hanggang dalawang buwan ang pansamantalang pag-suspende depende sa magiging resolusyon sa isyu ng fee collection.

Kaugnay nito, may nauna nang



naikabit na malaking tarpaulin sa man-made forest kung saan nakasaad na epektibo Oktubre 1, 2019 ay may bago nang rates sa entrance fee at paggamit ng mga pasilidad at resources sa nasabing protected areas.

Ang entrance fee para sa mga Pilipino ay P30, P100 naman sa mga dayuhan at P15 sa mga estudyante.

Libre naman ang mga persons with disabilities, senior citizen at bata na 7-anyos paba-ba basta't magpresinta lang ng ID.

Mayroong 16 protected areas sa Bohol kabilang na ang man-made forest, Chocolate Hills Natural Monument at Panglao Island Protected Seascape. (Issa Santiago)



01-18-20

DATE

01-18-20

Trucks transporting illegally extracted soil from Bulacan mountains impounded

By FREDDIE C. VELEZ

NORZAGARAY, Bulacan — To ensure that all materials from Bulacan mountains produced by quarrying are legally extracted, Governor Daniel R. Fernando led the random inspection of trucks transporting gravel and sand and other natural resources from Bulacan mountains on Thursday.

Two trucks loaded with soil and traveling in Barangay Tigbe in this mountain town were flagged down and inspected.

Fernando, together with the Bulacan Environment and Natural Resources, asked for pertinent documents but the driver and helpers of the two trucks failed to present any.

The trucks were brought at the Provincial Engineer's Office within the Capitol Compound in the City of Malolos for investigation.

Fernando said that the two trucks were transporting soil without permits and necessary documents. "It's illegal," Fernando said.

"Dapat lamang na personal nating tututukan at imonitor ang lahat ng mga bumi-byaheng mga truck mula sa kabundukan ng ating lalawigan upang matiyak na may mga permit ito at galing sa tamang lugar at hindi nakasira sa kailugan at kagubatan at lalong hindi naabusang ang ating likas yaman," the Bulacan governor said.

Fernando said that Bulacan mountains are being placed in danger due to the illegal quarrying and severe cutting down of trees.

He said it was high time that Bulakenyos should be united in saving Sierra Madre mountains and its natural resources. "Let us preserve the beauty of the province gifted by rich natural resources," he added.



Duterte: Water firms polluted Manila Bay

Page 1 of 2

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has stepped up his attacks against Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc.; this time blaming the two water firms for the heavy contamination in Manila Bay.

Speaking during the celebration of the 120-year presence of the Baptist Churches in the Philippines on Thursday night, Duterte said Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, who heads the Manila Bay Task Force, could never totally clean up Manila Bay because the two firms failed to establish water treatment facilities.

"All he can do is to reduce the contamination. Why? Because there is no water treatment," the President said.

"Until now, all the wastewater is blown, every day, into the Manila Bay. And that

job was supposed to be done by the one who got the contract of water, sewer and sewerage, which is the two companies," he said.

Duterte ordered the cleanup of the bay in 2019.

He also vowed to name those involved in the crafting of the "onerous" water distribution agreement between the government and the two private companies.

"I will reveal who are they so that you can ask them, including the Ayala[s] and

>PollutedA2



Duterte: Water firms polluted Manila Bay

Page 2 of 2

■ POLLUTED FROM A1

Duterte

[Manuel] Pangilinan, *'Bakit mo ginawa sa amin 'yan* (Why did you do that to us)?" Duterte said.

"I have nothing against you personally, but you have to explain to the Filipino people why you did it," he added.

The President has ordered a review of the concession contract between the government and the two distribution companies following the water crisis that hit Metro Manila over a year ago.

After claiming that the contract was onerous, the President ordered the Department of Justice and the Office of the Solicitor

General to draft a new deal to present to Maynilad and Manila Water.

He said the two concessionaires can accept or reject the new contract, but said they would be facing his former spokesman, Harry Roque Jr., if he decides to press charges against them.

He reiterated the government would not pay Maynilad and Manila Water the P10.8 billion as compensation for losses incurred after their proposal for rate increases was denied.

The President threatened to file economic sabotage and economic plunder charges against the water firms.

On January 7, Duterte gave the concessionaires the choice of accepting the new contracts or facing the cancellation of their present deals.

But he said he was willing to make amends with the concessionaires if they accept the "corrected" contracts.

"I suppose that up to now, they must already have the copies of the proposed contract, as corrected," Duterte said in an exclusive interview with ABS-CBN aired on Friday night.

"And I suppose if they are willing to accept the conditions that are being laid down there in the proposal, I think we can negotiate again," he added.

The government is targeting the completion of the new water contracts within three to six months. Duterte was incensed by the two firms after the Singapore-based Permanent Court of Arbitration issued separate rulings, ordering

the Philippine government to pay P3.4 billion and P7.39 billion to Maynilad and Manila Water, respectively, for their supposed losses and damages.

Reacting to Duterte's tirades and threats, both the Pangilinan-led Maynilad and Ayala-owned Manila Water said they would no longer collect the P10.8-billion compensation.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System had revoked the extension of the water companies' contracts.

The 25-year water concession agreements were signed in 1997 during the term of former president Fidel Ramos. In 2009 by the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo extended the agreements until 2037.





01-18-20

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Lawyers of water deals bared soon

President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday night vowed to reveal the names of government lawyers who crafted the contract with water concessionaries Maynilad and Manila Water containing onerous provisions

greatly disadvantageous to the government.

The President made the remark in a speech delivered during the 120th year celebration of the Baptist Churches in

Turn to page A2

Lawyers of water deals bared soon

"I will reveal who they are so you can ask them, including Ayala and Pangilinan" whose business enterprises bagged the contract to operate and manage the water distribution firms servicing Metro Manila and its environs

From page A1

the Philippines at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City.

According to the President, unmasking the lawyers is important so that the ordinary Filipino on the street can ask them why they allowed the contract despite the numerous violations it contained.

"So that's what pisses me off. Why? Because the provisions contained in the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act are all there. The government lawyers and everyone involved try to explain their role as only minimal. But I said whether we renew the contracts or not the Filipino people should know who the lawyers are as I reveal their names," the President said.

"I will reveal who they are so you can ask them, including Ayala and Pangilinan" whose business enterprises bagged the contract to operate and manage the water distribution firms servicing Metro Manila and its environs.

The President also urged the general public to pursue the matter to its logical end should for some reason or other he is unable to complete the inquiry or his term as Chief Executive ends before the case is satisfactorily concluded.

"I have nothing against you (the Ayala Group) personally, but you have to explain to the Filipino people why you did it. Just tell the Filipino why," he quickly added.

"I say this. If I do not reach the finish line for one reason or another, do not forget this

water distribution contracts alongside the letter of the law, "all the provisions, the prohibited acts in the Anti-Graft Law is there in the contract itself," the President said.

"So how come the lawyers of this Republic allowed it to happen?" he asked rhetorically of the contracts that also gives him nightmares.

He likewise said a draft contract has already been sent to Maynilad and Manila Water who have the option to accept them or not.

"I have a draft contract prepared and submitted to them. If they do not agree to it, fine. Okay. I will take over and nationalize the water resources of the Philippines," the chief executive said.

He also said Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu has a hard time making the waters of Manila Bay clean allegedly because the water concessionaries have not built the wastewater facilities that make this possible.

According to him, a rejection from the water concessionaries would mean the filing of charges in court. In the event the draft contract is accepted, "then maybe we have a compromise."

He also said Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu has a hard time making the waters of Manila Bay clean allegedly because the water concessionaries have not built the wastewater facilities that make this possible.

"You must know Secretary Cimatu could never improve the waters reaching

the Manila Bay. All he can do is reduce the contamination," the President of the water concessionaires' alleged inability or unwillingness to build proper waste water treatment facilities.

"Until now, all the wastewater is discharged every day to the Manila Bay. And that job was supposed to be done by . . . the one who got the (sewer and sewerage) contracts, which are the two companies' Maynilad and Manila Water, he said.

The President also said the water concessionaires ought to have sleepless nights as government is determined to pursue the matter for as long as he holds the office.

While the idea is unthinkable, he said the Ayala Group who manages Manila Water, for example, should explain and possibly apologize for crafting an obviously lopsided contract.

explain till his term ends.
"Now, they are having sleepless nights. You would notice that you can hardly hear a whimper from them," he said.

"I have nothing against you (the Ayala Group) personally, but you have to explain to the Filipino people why you did it. Just tell the Filipino why," he quickly added.

According to him, it is the duty of the President to see to it that crimes are prosecuted but acknowledged the process to correct the mistakes done more than 20 years ago will be a long process.

"I have prepared one that has been submitted to the (water concessionaries). It is a long process... (and) I'll be out in a few months. Please do not abandon this case because I said if you are looking for the biggest - it's really (these) people who take advantage of their wealth and position," the President said.

At the event, the President said former presidential Spokesman Harry Roque is one of the lawyers the water concessionaires will face in court.

Francis T. Wakefield@tribunephil_FTW



Rody vows to expose former officials behind water deals

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte yesterday vowed to expose the former government officials behind the water concession deals he described as disadvantageous to the public.

The deals were awarded during the presidency of Fidel Ramos and extended during the administration of Gloria Mapacagal-Arroyo. Both are Duterte allies.

Duterte said the public de-

serves to know why state lawyers allowed the implementation of the concession contracts with Manila Water and Maynilad even when these deals violated the law.

"The violation, I said, contained in the anti-graft and corrupt practices are all there. And so the lawyers of government, everybody is trying to be minimalist, they are trying to explain their role as minimal," the President said during a gathering of Baptist Christians

in Pasay City.

"But I said, even if we renew the contract or not, the people should know... and I will reveal all of them.

I'm just trying to finish the... I will reveal who are they so you can ask them... why did you do it to us? *Bigyan mo ako ng sagot, kung hindi babarilin ko yang bayag mo* (Give me an answer or I'll shoot you in the balls)," he added.

Duterte reiterated that the water concessionaires are us-

ing the contracts to earn huge sums at public expense as he pointed out that he is offering new contracts to the water firms and is ready to "nationalize" water distribution if the deals are rejected.

At the same event, he admitted that the environment department cannot improve Manila Bay because of the absence of water treatment mechanisms.

"Now, the problem now is... you must know, Manila Bay

could never be improved by (Environment Secretary Roy) Cimatu.

All he can do is reduce the contamination. Why? Because there is no water treatment.

Until now, all the wastewater are blown, every day, to the Manila Bay," the President said.

"And that job was supposed to be done by the one who got the contract of water, sewer and sewerage, which is the two companies," he said.

The water concessionaires, he added, are now having "sleepless nights" because of his tirades against the deals they signed with the government.

"You would notice that you could hardly hear a wimp out of them," Duterte said. "Even Ayala would (do) the unthinkable of writing an apology and signing it. I have nothing against you personally but you have to explain to the Filipino people why you did it."



KEY GOV'T ACHIEVEMENTS CITED

PALACE LAUNCHES 'DUTERTE LEGACY' CAMPAIGN FOR A BETTER PHILIPPINES

By **Julie M. Aurelio**
@JMAurelioINQ

Saying President Duterte's vision of a better Philippines is "already a reality," Malacañang officials highlighted the government's impressive gains as the President's legacy to the people.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea cited significant poverty reduction, job creation, infrastructure and the creation of the Bangsamoro autonomous region as the key achievements of the administration.

"The real change we have all yearned for so long is now happening. We have made the significant starts, pioneered initiatives and accomplished

impressive milestones as a nation during the first half of the Duterte administration ... The President's vision for a better Philippines is already a reality," Medialdea said on Friday.

He made the remarks at the launch of the "Duterte Legacy," the information drive of the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) on the impact of the Duterte administration's programs.

'Build, Build, Build'

The PCOO began the program as the Duterte administration entered the second half of the President's term, which will end in 2022.

Medialdea cited the signifi-

cant slowdown in poverty incidence, which fell to 21 percent in the first half of 2018 from 27.6 percent in the same period in 2015.

He said the Philippines was "well on our way to achieving our target of 14 percent poverty incidence by 2022."

He also highlighted the government's ambitious "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program, which he said ushered in a "golden age of infrastructure" and created four million jobs.

"More than rehabilitating and modernizing our structures to bridge gaps between our people, 'Build, Build, Build' paved the way for the implementation of high impact flag-

ship projects that propel equitable growth and development in the country," Medialdea said.

He also cited gains in human capital development through efforts to improve access to health care and tertiary education, and programs to protect the welfare of overseas Filipino workers.

Boracay rehab

In addition, the law creating the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was passed after two decades of negotiations.

"The Duterte administration is dedicated to building a nation which respects and gives equal opportunity to ev-

eryone regardless of race, religion and ethnicity. We have established the BARMM, a region that we believe will fuel growth in Mindanao and prosperity to all," he said.

Another gain was the President's directive to rehabilitate Boracay Island and Manila Bay, which Medialdea said spoke of Mr. Duterte's strong political will to preserve natural resources.

The Duterte Legacy will feature truth and information caravans detailing the government's achievements, priority messages and will also counter disinformation against the government.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said they would produce a

documentary series, a quarterly magazine and podcasts to disseminate the government's gains to the public.

Several Cabinet secretaries were present to showcase their agencies' "legacies" to the nation.

Education Secretary Leonor Briones cited the Department of Education's Alternative Learning System, which reached more out-of-school youth and adult enrollees than previous administrations.

Briones said there was a 57-percent increase in the enrolled out-of-school youth and adults as compared to previous administrations, with 1,329,667 learners completing the program. INQ



Page 1 of 2

Never-ending greed

“ To be removed as provisions of the deal are the numerous pass-on expenses that water users pay for in their monthly bills and the guarantee that the government will not intervene in the setting of rates.

It was providential that President Rody Duterte would line up the faults of the water service firms during a congregation of Baptist ministers. This is similar to making his statements with God as his witness.

Rody repeated his demand for accountability from concessionaires

Maynilad Water Services Inc.

and Manila Water Corp. for devoting their contracts with the government to maximize profits, while totally neglecting their obligation of setting up facilities for wastewater treatment.

The cleaning up of Manila Bay is becoming frustrating for Rody since the pollution is coming from residents and establishments in Manila whose refuse goes straight to the capital city's main body of water.

During the religious event on Thursday night, Rody said Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force, could never completely clean up the bay because of its continuous contamination.

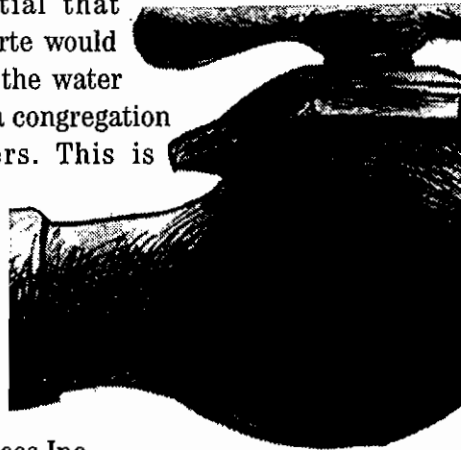
“All he can do is (to) reduce the contamination,” the President noted.

With at least a 15 million population, Rody lamented that Manila does not have a proper water treatment facility. “Until now, all the wastewater is thrown every day to the Manila Bay,” he noted.

“The job (of properly disposing wastewater) was supposed to be done by the one who got the contract of water sewerage, which is the two companies,” Duterte said.

In January 2019, Rody ordered the massive cleanup of Manila Bay and for which he issued Administrative Order 16.

The President made sure the two opportunistic water





Never-ending greed

The negotiations would not free those responsible for the onerous terms of the contracts as Rody expressed determination to go after them.

"I will reveal who are they, so that you can ask them, including Ayala (Manila Water chairman Fernando Zobel de Ayala) and Pangilinan (Maynilad chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan): why did you do this to us?" Duterte asked.

Pangilinan's Metro Pacific Investments Corp. owns a controlling stake in Maynilad, while Manila Water is a subsidiary of the Ayala Corp.

**“
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Rody has given the water concessionaires two options, which was to accept the new water contracts or face cancellation of their deals.

To be removed as provisions of the deal are the numerous pass-on expenses that water users pay for in their monthly bills and the guarantee that the government will not intervene in the setting of rates.

To ensure that the new contract would be equitable to both government and the private firms and at the same time remove doubts in the business sector, consultants from the Asian Development Bank will be commissioned in the revision of the terms.

The aim is to have a deal in which the Filipino consumers will derive the most benefit from.

The water firms failed to temper their greed that resulted to their current predicament of potentially losing a lucrative engagement with government on the provision of water.

Consider the fact that the onerous terms of the contracts were the basis for the P11 billion that the Singapore-based Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled that the government should compensate for renegeing on the terms of the deal.

Where else can one find such opportunism?

Page 2 of 2



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS
INQUIRER

A10
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1

BANNER
 STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

DATE

PAGE 1/

TITLE:



Editor
Robert Jaworski L. Abaño

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN Locals in Lila town, Bohol province, are on the lookout for whale sharks, which are being drawn for tourists to see as part of the town's attractions. —NATHAN MANTUA / CONTRIBUTOR

BOHOL TOWN MAYOR DEFIES ACTING GOV ON WHALE SHARK FEEDING

By Leo Udtohan
@leoudtohanINQ

TAGBILARAN CITY—Lila town Mayor Arturo “Jed” Piollo II continues to defy an executive order issued by Bohol Acting Gov. Rene Relampagos suspending all whale shark feeding and watching activities in the town.

Piollo also declined an invitation by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) to attend a committee hearing on Monday, Jan. 13.

He instead invited the SP members to come to his town

for the same purpose.

Whale shark interactions, as efforts to draw these animals to the sight of tourists have been called, “will continue,” Piollo said.

Ordinance needed

On Dec. 23, last year, Relampagos issued an executive order to stop the spotting and feeding of whale sharks at Barangay Taug, Lila town, at least 28 kilometers from the capital city of Tagbilaran.

Relampagos said an ordinance was still needed regulating the whale shark encounters,

which must be approved by the SP in coordination with other government agencies.

The municipality of Lila has not passed any such ordinance, the executive order pointed out.

“We are not after the total ban of whale shark interaction but only on the ecological trapping of marine wildlife by provisioning and/or [the] act of feeding and luring and other activities, which will harm these marine mammals and which are in violation of the law,” the order said.

Jerome Gonzales, provincial director of the Department of

the Interior and Local Government, said the governor has direct supervision over mayors as stated in the Local Government Code.

The provincial governor is mandated to ensure that all executive officials and employees of the province faithfully discharge their duties and functions as provided by law and to enforce all laws and ordinances

Gonzales also suggested a dialogue between the two local officials.

‘Fake ecotourism’

Piollo said that since whale shark interaction was happening in Lila town, it should be the officials of the municipality who should craft their own ordinance, and not the province.

“When you have an attrac-

The Taug Whale Shark Watching and Snorkeling has employed at least 102. There are 35 paddlers from Barangay Taud and neighboring villages who have a minimum salary of P340 per day with free food. There are 15 personnel who look after the welfare of whale sharks.

Local and foreign tourists pay P500 and P1,000, respectively



DISASTER DEPT' CREATION PRESSED

By Ryan
Ponce
Pacpaco

HOUSE leaders led by Tingog party-list Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez yesterday vowed to work for the swift enactment into law of the proposed bill creating the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR) when Congress resumes session on Monday following the Taal Volcano explosion.

"Time and again, the wrath of nature reminds us to come up with strategic and systematic approaches to disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response," said Yedda Romualdez, the chairperson of the House Committee on the Welfare of Children and one of the principal proponents of DDR.

Quezon City Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo urged Malacañang to certify as urgent the bill creating DDR.

Castelo, vice chairperson of the House Committee on Metro Manila Development, said "our experience on the slow and uncoordinated response to the Taal Volcano eruption proved the government needs to enact the proposed law as soon as possible."

"What we lack is a coordinating body with highly trained individuals and available budget to handle such delicate tasks," Castelo explained.

Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte also sought the swift congressional approval of DDR to focus on, apart from the creation of permanent evacuation centers, the formulation of disaster management plans, particularly for communities most vulnerable to natural calamities.

Villafuerte called on the Senate to act at once on its version of the House-approved consolidated DDR bill when Congress resumes session next week, as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ordered the mandatory evacuation of residents of Lipa and Tanuan cities plus at least 12 municipalities in Batangas in the path of Taal Volcano's latest fury.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) are bracing for the "big bang" or hazardous explosive eruption, base surges and volcanic tsunami that experts fret could happen "within hours or days."

Villafuerte, an author of the House-approved

consolidated DDR bill, said "Taal's continued eruption after four decades of dormancy gives the Congress more reason to pass this measure creating a new department that would let government best prepare for natural calamities along with other disasters induced by climate change."

Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, another principal author of the DDR measure, expressed belief that the response to Taal Volcano explosion could be better if the DDR is already approved into law and existing.

"Oo mas maganda sana. Kasi ang OCD (Office of Civil Defense) may powers na dapat siguraduhin na may contingency plan at updated ito," said Salceda.

"Eh halata mo naman ngayon, biglang nag-evacuate 'yung mga tao tapos hindi nila alam kung saan pumunta," Salceda added.

Romualdez, wife of House Majority Leader and Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez, said the department will be accountable and responsible for overseeing, coordinating and implementing comprehensive disaster risk and vulnerability reduction and management programs and redirect policy drifts among other agencies handling such tasks.

The House committees on government reorganization and disaster management already approved, last November 20, the still-unnumbered substitute bill consolidating all measures re-filed in the 18th Congress establishing the DDR.

On November 25, 2019, the DDR hurdled the House Committee on Ways and Means. Meanwhile the Committee on Appropriations is scheduled to discuss the measure this coming week to approve its budget component.

The Salceda panel granted exemption from taxes, import duties and donor's tax on foreign donations, and goods and services donated from abroad under DDR.

Last January 8, Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano said the passage of a measure creating the DDR will be prioritized when Congress resumes session on January 20.

The House had passed on third and final reading a similar measure in the previous 17th Congress.

The Senate, however, ran out of time to pass its counterpart bill.



Mga estudyante turuan ng disaster awareness – Lapid

ISINUSULONG ni Senador Lito Lapid na turuan ng subject tungkol sa disaster awareness at mitigation ang lahat ng primary at secondary school sa bansa.

Ayon kay Lapid, napakahalagang matanggaap ng kabataan ang sapat na ka-

handaan ng bawat isa sa kalamidad na maaring tumama sa bansa anumang oras.

Sa Senate Bill 1140, layunin nito na pagsamahin sa curricula ng elementary at sekondarya ang subject na tatalakay sa natural at man-made disaster

ng sa gayon ay mamulat sila sa usapin ng disaster preparedness.

Layon din ng panukala na turuan ang mga estudyante na makipagpartisipa sa disaster mitigation na kalauna'y makakatulong sa bansa.

"Mahalaga na bago pa man tumama ang

kalamidad sa ating bansa, nakahanda na ang ating mga kababayan. Hindi na sapat ang rumeresponde na lamang tayo dahil may nasira ng istruktura o may nasaktan na tayong kababayan," sabi ni Lapid. **(Dindo Matining)**



We need these departments

Page 1 of 2



TWO events of national significance occurred lately. They highlight the need to create two more departments in the Executive: The Department of Overseas Filipino Workers and Department of Disaster Resilience. //

With the Middle East fast becoming a flashpoint where wars have become normal, over two million overseas Filipino workers are in constant danger.

“Recent events have highlighted their importance.”

I am not talking here of events like what have been happening to our OFWs—one was killed and put into a freezer; another was sexually abused and beaten black and blue. Instead, I am talking about the possibility of World War III, a nuclear war. Our OFWs would be in grave danger!

This demands the immediate creation of a Department of OFWs so that government can focus on problems faced by our migrant workers. They deserve no less, given their sacrifices and their contribution to the economy.

Another department that is urgently needed is the Department of Disaster Resilience. In so many columns, I have lamented the failure of Congress to enact a law creating an agency focusing on disaster resiliency. This, despite the fact that the Philippines experiences numerous calamities.

It's lamentable that while the House of Representatives has passed the bill the creation of this department, as diligently co-authored and pushed by Tingog Representative Yedda Romualdez, the Senate has failed to have a counterpart law. Now there is no reason why it should not pass. What is happening with Taal Volcano reminds us of the urgency of this law.

If there is anything that Congress should prioritize when it reconvenes, it is this.

Yes, there are government agencies that protect OFWs. But these are not enough.

With regard to disasters, there is also the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, which has since been devolved. But these are mere ad hoc agencies.

We can only hope that a devastating, explosive eruption does not occur.

I have read and heard so much in the past that towns around the rim of Taal Lake are actually part of the danger zone.

Speaking of Tagaytay City, which we all know as a tourist destination, I wonder if it will ever fully recover. If the volcanic ashes are not removed immediately, they could become as hard as cement, like what happened after the Mount Pinatubo eruption.

My *gulay*, I cannot imagine how the investors of restaurants, condominiums and resorts are now feeling. My wife and I also have invested in a condominium unit—GMA7's Montaire—at the rim of the lake.

For the record, that condominium unit was the payment for my wife's decorative effort on Nards Jimenez's residence in Dasmariñas Village, with an additional P500,000 for a parking lot. We were planning to sell

Turn to A5



We need these departments

Page 2 of 2

We need...

From M

it, but now I doubt if we ever can. I empathize with those who have invested in Tagaytay City!

Insofar as all the evacuees are concerned, I wonder if they can really return to their homes, and live a normal life, anytime soon. At evacuation centers, they are already facing lack of food and water. I cannot imagine how they are coping with the poor sanitation.

And what about American aid? I recall that the Americans were quick to help when "Yolanda" devastated Leyte and environs. Where are the Americans now?

* * *

I must apologize to Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go.

In earlier columns, I have criticized him for always being with President Duterte despite the fact that he is already a senator.

But now his dedication and commitment to the poor are showing. He is there for the needy.

Santa Banana, Bong Go has already opened his 58th Malasakit Center. Can any other senator claim to do what the senator is doing?

He is pushing for a bill to have all hospitals, private and public, add beds in the ward section so more indigents can be served.

If the opposition senators can duplicate what Bong Go is doing, the poor and the needy will love them.

My *gulay*, Bong Go is fast becoming my idea of a politician who puts the needs of the poor above himself.

If he does not mind, I would also like to suggest that he push for the creation of special courts to try cases involving illegal drugs. I recall that the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos created special courts to try those arrested for involvement in illegal drugs.

Go should also push for the creation of community-based rehabilitation centers.

I myself was involved in drug rehabilitation in the 1970s when I was with the DARE Foundation. Drug addicts need to be surrounded by their families so they could become productive citizens again.



Plastik na banderitas sa piyesta inireklamo

DISMAYADO ang EcoWaste Coalition sa labis umanong paggamit ng mga single-use plastic bilang banderitas sa mga kalsada sa Tondo at Pandacan sa Maynila para sa pagdiriwang ng pista ng Santo Niño.

"We are deeply saddened by the lavish use of plastic banderitas in connection with the feast of Santo Niño as if there was no tomorrow. It's an overkill of wasteful SUPs," ani Jove Benosa, Zero Waste Campaigner ng EcoWaste.

Sinabi ni Benosa na walang pupuntahan

ang mga plastik na ito pagkatapos ng piyesta kundi basurahan na daragdag pa sa gabundok na plastik na nahahakot sa Metro Manila.

"Far from being harmless, these disposable banderitas are a threat to the natural environment, especially when these are littered, burned or dumped on land or at sea," ani Benosa.

Hindi umano ito tugma sa programa ni Mayor Isko Moreno na linisin ang siyudad.

Ang "plastic banderitas overkill" ay hindi rin umano tug-

ma sa panawagan ng Simbahang Katolika noong nakaraang taon na makiisa sa pagbabawas sa paggamit ng single-use plastic.

"As plastic banderitas, which are made from chemicals obtained from fossil fuels, serve no functional purpose and are not really essential for the good conduct of any festivity, we appeal to all barangay and parish officials to stop this classic example of preventable wastefulness," saad ng EcoWaste sa kalatas. --**Leifbilly Begas**



Unreasonable opposition

Page 1 of 2



VARIOUS groups in the opposition made up of the usual Yellows, the Liberal Party, the obscurantist clergy and the hastily organized front-organizations of the vociferous Left now called Sector and People Opposed to Kaliwa Dam (STOP Kaliwa) has been formed to purposely oppose the construction of the Kaliwa Dam. Their argument of defending the rights of the indigenous people is clearly obstructionist and senseless.

Before that, the hypocrites simply allowed our indigenous brothers to roam and fend for their survival in the forest areas. These anti-progress rascals are again extorting our people to oppose but refuse to offer any logically and scientific explanation why they are passionately against the building of a dam that would add to the supply of potable water to the already teeming population in Metropolitan Manila area.

They recklessly continue to sow disenchantment to hide their motive that is pointed to as absolutely bankrupt while advancing the interest of their foreign brokers to stall progress and development in this country.

In a news release by this motley band calling itself STOP Kaliwa, they cited three main reasons, to wit: 1) The project violates legal processes and would displace thousands of indigenous peoples. Accordingly, the project failed to secure the Free Prior and Informed Consent from the indigenous settlers as shown by allegations that the National Commission on Indigenous People, the MWSS and some local officials are railroading the legal processes. 2) The project will cause long-term, irreversible environmental damage to the Sierra Madre and its biodiversity. They claim the project violates the National Integrated Protected Areas System, and has not secured the Environmental Compliance Certificate from the

The oppositors should have raised valid and more intelligent arguments that the new dam will provide additional 600 cubic liters of water daily to Metro Manila and nearby residents starting 2023. This band of hecklers cannot just make a sweeping generalization that it will displace our indigenous settlers on the Sierra Madre. There is already an estimate of the total land area that will be submerged as a result of the damming and the number of people that will be affected like what China did to elevate to higher grounds houses, temples and churches, monuments and even cultural sites like their construction of the Three Gorges Dam in the Yangtze River.

These agitators cannot simply demand compliance to the National Integrated Protected Areas System or in securing from settlers Free Prior and Informed Consent before they will be given clearance of ECC by the DENR.

Compliance from NIPAS and FPIC are contestable issues raised and purposely rooted on ideological grounds to stall the construction of the dam.

Even their oligarch brethrens like Ayala of Manila Water and Pangilinan of Maynilad Water have given their go-signal knowing they will earn more from the project. They even demand the equivalent payment for relocation to clear the areas to speed up the construction.

“ Why go against the construction of the Kaliwa Dam? ”

To be precise, the lands that will be affected are not agricultural, but forest lands falling under the category of lands of the public domain. Whatever fruits and products derived by the settlers does not strictly fall under the category of agricultural products where labor have been systematically applied as farmers do to till the land they own. Thus, lands falling under the NIPAS

them as private lands. It cannot even be said they have prior rights over these lands like farmers claiming the area as agricultural lands. Forest lands are intended to be preserved to its state of nature to ensure that water that flows into river and settle in the dam will remain pristine and clean. This explains why it is prohibited for settlers, farmers or corporations to engage any activity like cultivating the land for farming or from engaging in any commercial, industrial and mining activity in the areas classified as forest lands.

Nonetheless, the clerics are again most vocal in opposing the construction using our indigenous settlers, which are nomadic settlers who subsist in hunting and gathering of forest products as the Aetas and the Dumagats. More than that, the government has already offered them relocation sites away from the dam and its tributary streams to cause pollution.

Strangely enough, they refuse to talk of the interest for the loan granted by China for which the Philippine will only have to come out with a 15 percent upfront with China shouldering 85 percent. It would appear they are siding to the objection of the World Bank which the world knows is now desperate in seeking clients gullible enough to pay usurious interest rate to sustain its financial brokers in Washington.

Remember, the clerics have their nasty track record in the infamous Code-NGO where they induced the Arroyo administration to issue government bond in the amount of P10 billion payable in 10 years for a staggering amount of P35 billion. The commission for facilitating the deal was immediately deducted upon the signing of which the bulk went mostly to the Jesuit-controlled NGO and the rest divided by their so-called financial hustlers. To quote what this column wrote on Feb. 2, 2002:

“...on March 6, 2001, with the smell of the Erap administration still around, the Caucus of Development for Non-Governmental Organizations notoriously known as Code-NGO had been nudging the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipini-



Unreasonable opposition

was already a done deal coyly made in the name of the poor named "Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Certificate Empowerment" or PEACE bonds.

The bonds were consigned to RCBC without going through public bidding. The commission obtained by RCBC in its subsequent disposition to RCBC-Capital was in reality a "kickback" given to Code-NGO in the category of a fixer. RCBC settled down to a P239-million underwriter's fee with certain Mayo and Guevarra getting P59 million and P39 million of their respective commissions, and the net of P1.4 billion going to Code-NGO.

To make sure Code-NGO gets the commission intact, the hustlers made it a point that not a centavo will be deducted as tax. It has to be "sweetened" to induce RCBC to bite the contract, like seeking a BIR ruling to have the deal exempted on the ground that the bonds have been classified as certificates of indebtedness and not deposit substitutes as they would only be issued to one buyer. It also accorded them the privilege that gains from the sale, exchange or retirement of said bonds shall not be subject to capital gains tax because they have a maturity of more than five years. Thus, the Monetary Board issued Resolution No. 878 granting "secondary reserve eligibility" to the bonds which was later amended by Resolution No. 1545.

What made the whole thing odious is that the operational expenses incurred negate their messianic claim of wanting to alleviate the poor. In fact, the first beneficiaries were the foundations of leading business monopolists, political kingmakers and do-gooders all rolled into one. The Ayala Foundation got an award of P7.3 million for water system installation project in the Manggahan Floodway, while ABS-CBN obtained P3 million for its so-called women empowerment project, and the rest receiving half a million pesos each.

Ma. Socorro "Marissa" Camacho-Reyes, the sister of Finance Secretary Camacho, acted as the lynchpin, in what was made to appear a transaction between the Bureau of Treasury and RCBC. The 12 national NGOs and five regional networks, were in fact acting in behalf of "Peace, Equity, and Access for Community Empowerment Foundation" headed by a cleric identified as Fr. Noel Vasquez. With Danilo Songco acting as the overall coordinator, a member of the board of the DBP, and the "kickbacks" going to the Foundation headed by the husband of then DSWD Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman.

The Code-NGO's swindling did not produce a drop of water, but only their saliva as capital to be truly called manna from heaven.

rpkapun@gmail.com

Page 2 of 2

Australia fires a warning for PH to protect climate

THE Australia bushfires must serve as a warning for countries to accelerate the phaseout of fossil fuels and scale up climate action in the Philippines, according to environment advocates.

"We have a moral responsibility to our common dreams for our families for a safe and secured life at present and the future. This comes with the assurance of sustaining ecosystems," said Rodne Galicha, executive director of Living Laudato Si Philippines, a faith-based nongovernment organization.

Prolonged droughts and record-breaking temperatures have intensified the fires in Australia, which has burned more than 10 million hectares of land. It has killed around one billion animals and placed key species to extinction.

Galicha remarked that climate-related disasters had implications beyond impacts on Australian biodiversity and communities. He added that preventing disasters of this magnitude "require global holistic action beneficial not only to a particular race, not only to humanity but the planet as a whole."

Global and local leaders must recognize the urgency for mitigating climate change to prevent similar incidences in the future, according to Galicha. He expressed his disappointment on the outcomes of the recent climate talks in Madrid, Spain, stat-

ing that "denial of the climate crisis is the denial of humanity's future existence."

Despite the warning of scientists for drastic emissions cuts to limit global warming by 2030, there was a lack of significant progress made in Madrid. Key calls, including raising targets for climate change mitigation pledges, strengthening mechanisms to avert loss and damage, and rules for the global carbon market failed to be accomplished in the negotiations.

Thaddeus Martinez, veteran forester from Haribon Foundation, emphasized that governments must look beyond the short-term benefits of fossil fuels on economic development. He stated that "it is not just the economic production supported by this power generation that needs to be examined, but also the impacts on us. Renewable energy power generation will be more appropriate."

Forest fires in the Philippines

The Philippines is not at a risk of forest fires the scale of Australia, according to Martinez. However, global warming could increase the occurrences of small forest fires that would have devastating impact on ecosystems and nearby communities.

While the country lacks recent data

on forest fires, Martinez observed from anecdotal evidence that climate change impacts have made forests more vulnerable than before. "There is the same case of fire, but given that we have climate change, we can say that there are more hazards now compared to the previous decades," he said.

Around 90 percent of all forest fires in the Philippines are caused by human activities, according to Martinez. The most common cause is *kaingin*, or slashing-and-burning of forests to create more agricultural lands. This is illegal under the Forestry Reform Code of 1975.

Martinez noted the Cordilleras and the Zambales Mountains as two of the sites in the Philippines most prone to forest fires. Around 797 hectares of forestlands were destroyed from January to March 2019 in the Cordilleras due to *kaingin*, causing nearly P21 million in damages.

These cases, according to Martinez, show that nearly all the causes of forest fires, whether directly through *kaingin* or indirectly through climate change impacts, are ultimately anthropogenic. "Maybe there are some social aspects that we need to look at. Why are some people deliberately causing the fire? It's not only the natural causes, but it's anthropogenic, as well," he said.

To avoid this, Martinez highlighted the

need to empower local communities to protect forests. By educating them about forest-related laws, the impacts of climate change and burning of fossil fuels, and the importance of biodiversity, he hopes that the people would "have a true and deep concern for the environment."

For instance, he stated that one of Haribon's rainforestation sites in Mount Banahaw-San Cristobal was burned down last April. The three farmers responsible for the fires have been apprehended and would be trained to help restore the forests, in collaboration with the local community and government agencies.

Martinez also called to increase the capacity and resources of the Bureau of Fire Protection, which is legally mandated to handle forest fires.

Lastly, Martinez emphasized that the Philippine government must lead the way in phasing out coal plants and coal-mining operations on the domestic front as actively as it campaigns for it in the climate talks. This is to avoid adding forest fires into the growing list of hazards with which one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change must deal.

"If the people who are seated in government are the ones advocating for these coal-fired power plants, what is the return for us?" he said.

JOHN LEO ALGO



FCF's 'Adopt a Tree' best mining forest program

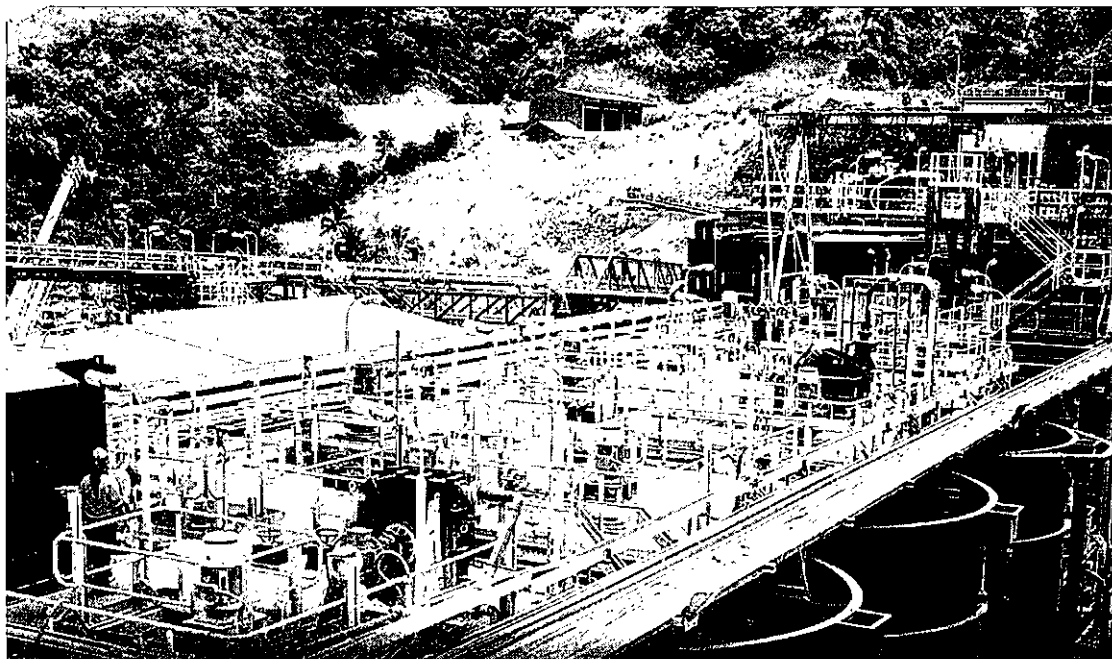
QUEZON, Nueva Vizcaya: London-based FCF Minerals Corp. in this upland town won the Best Mining Forest Program award (Metallic Category) for its "Adopt A Tree" Program.

The Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award (PMIEA) gave the award during the recently held 66th Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA) in Baguio City.

Ian Moller, FCF Minerals General Manager for sustainability, said the PMIEA is proof that the company is doing its very best to be compliant in all existing environmental laws, policies and compliances, and shows that there is such a thing as responsible mining.

"This is our second year of winning the Best Forest Mining Award and we aim to pursue more to help and properly sustain our rehabilitation efforts for the forest cover of Nueva Vizcaya and provide job opportunities to our stakeholders to improve their lives," he added.

The "Adopt a Tree, Adopt a Forest Mining Program" has put the mining firm in the PMIEA spotlight since 2008 as: Platinum Awardee (Exploration Category); 2011 first runner-up Best Mining Forest (Exploration Category) Awardee; second runner-up Safest Mines Award (Exploration Category) and second runner-up Best Mining Forest (Exploration Category) Awardee; 2013 Winner Best Mining Forest (Exploration Category); 2014 first runner-up Best Mining Forest



■ This photo shows part of the mining operations of London-based FCF Minerals Corp. in Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya. PHOTO FROM THE FCF MINERALS WEBSITE

(Exploration Category); 2017 third runner-up Best Mining Forest (Metallic Category); 2018 Winner Best Mining Forest (Metallic Category); and 2019 Winner Best Mining Forest (Metallic Category).

Moller said the scope of the environmental management includes among others, programs, projects and activities being implemented for the environmental protection and enhancement of mining areas, development of the host and neighboring communities, land use improvement, exploration, and mining site rehabilita-

tion and final decommissioning.

The PMIEA recognizes outstanding levels of dedication, initiative and innovation in the pursuit of entities involved in various aspects of mineral utilization.

The PMIEA was officially established under Executive Order (EO) 399 on Feb. 3, 1997 in compliance with the policy that mineral exploration and mining operation shall be pro-environment and pro-people in sustaining wealth creation and improving lives.

Under EO 399, exploration and mining operations shall be managed

in an environmentally responsible manner to achieve and maintain sustainable conditions at every stage of mineral exploration and mining operations, as well as the establishment of a functional and socially-acceptable post-disturbance land use capability.

The PMIEA is meant to be a fitting recognition of the private minerals sectors' initiatives and exemplary achievements in the protection of the environment.

All mining companies operating for at least one year qualify for the awards.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



2019 second hottest year — UN

Last year was the second warmest year on record, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) confirmed recently.

“The average global temperature has risen by about 1.1°C since the pre-industrial era and ocean heat content is at a record level,” said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

“On the current path of carbon dioxide emissions, we are heading toward a temperature increase of 3 to 5 degrees Celsius by the end of century.”

WMO analysis showed the annual global temperature in 2019 was 1.1°C warmer than in the period from 1850-1900, or the pre-industrial era.

Only 2016 was hotter due to a very strong El Niño which causes warming, combined with long-term climate change.

Furthermore, average

temperatures for the past five years and 10 years, respectively, were the highest on record.

Since the 1980s, each decade has been warmer

than the previous one, a trend the UN agency expects will continue due to the record level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

WMO added that 2019 and the past decade also were characterized by retreating ice, record sea levels, increasing ocean heat and acidification,

and extreme weather, all of which have “major impacts” on human health and the natural environment.

Meanwhile, the New Year began where 2019 left off, according to Taalas.

“Australia had its hottest, driest year on record in 2019, setting the scene for the massive bushfires which were so devastating to people and property, wildlife, ecosystems and the environment,” he said.

“Unfortunately, we expect to see much extreme weather throughout 2020 and the coming decades, fueled by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.”



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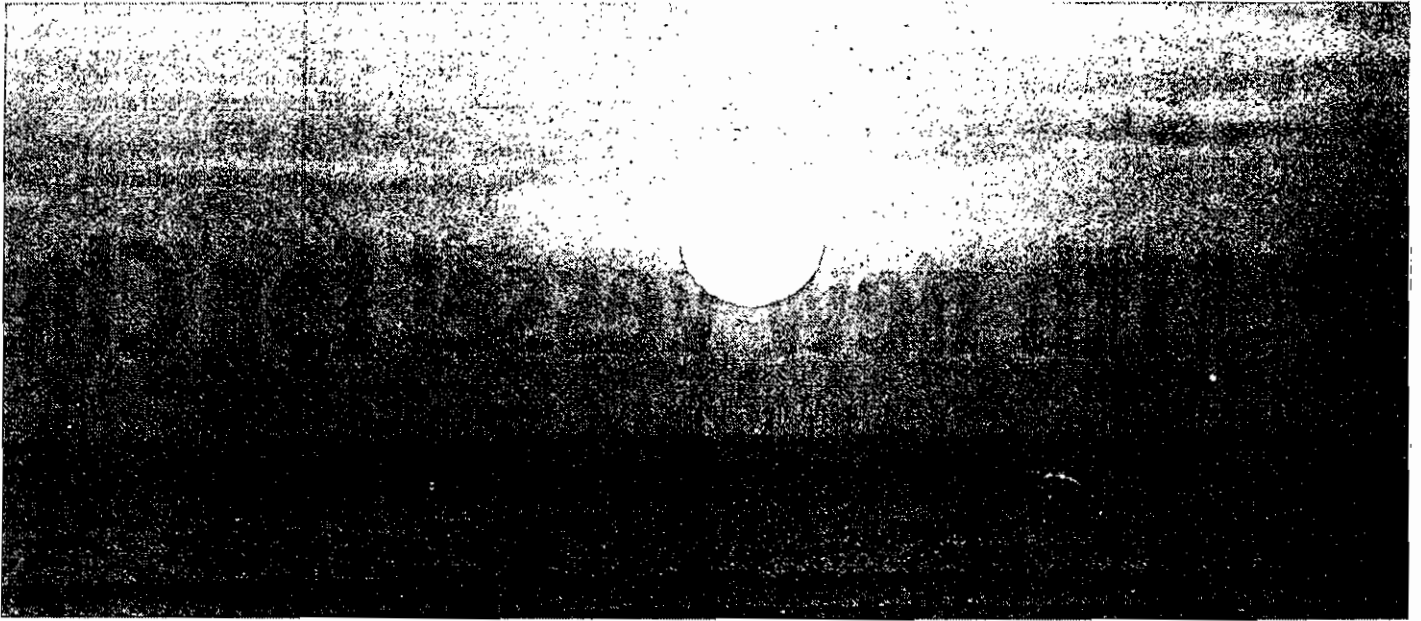
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2019 was the second warmest year on record after 2016, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

UN PHOTO



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01-18-20

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PAGE 1/ _____

DATE



future worth waiting for The sight of this boy swimming in what used to be the foul waters of Navotas, which empties into Manila Bay, offers a splash of hope for those brought down by the destruction wrought by the Taal volcano eruption. As the continued cleanup of Manila Bay shows, drastic rehabilitation is possible with concerted effort.

ROMAN PROSPERO @tribuneph_RR



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TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/

DATE _____



ENVIRONMENTALISTS help clean up the city's infamous Baseco Compound along Manila Bay and check on the progress of the construction of toilets that benefit hundreds of informal urban dwellers in the area.

BOB DUNGO JR. @tribunephil_bob