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DENR

IN THE NEWS

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DENR orders closure of SJ slaughterhouse

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the closure of a privately-owned slaughterhouse in San Juan City for dumping its untreated wastewater into San Juan River which drains to Manila Bay.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu led the padlocking of the Megga Foods and Stockfarm, Inc. (MFSI), which has been operating for over 30 years in Barangay Kabayanan.

Cimatu said the pollutive impacts of MFSI's operations "equally poses direct harm to public health and the safety of residents within the area, and to efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay."

The closure was made after the Pollution Adjudication Board of DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) issued



Sec. Cimatu

a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) dated Jan. 21, 2020 against the MFSI after it was found to be violating Republic Act No. 9275 or the Clean Water Act of 2004.

Cimatu cited the cooperation of the San Juan City local government led by Mayor Francisco Javier "Francis" M. Zamora who was also with Cimatu during the operation.

"This again is proof that the political will of the national leadership to reha-

bilitate Manila Bay becomes more potent if the same political will is seen in our local executives like Mayor Zamora," Cimatu said.

The San Juan City local government has earlier issued a closure order against the facility after it was found to have been operating without a water discharge and sanitary permits.

Results of an inspection of its wastewater conducted by EMB personnel showed the slaughterhouse failed multiple physical and chemical analyses, including tests for oil and grease, fecal coliform, and phosphate-phosphorous.

Test showed its effluent count for fecal coliform was 3,500,000 most probable number per 100 milliliter (MPN/100 ml) against the DENR standard of 400 MPN/100 ml. as per DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 2016-08 for Inland Water Class C category which San Juan River is classified.



DENR shuts down San Juan abattoir

A 30-YEAR-OLD slaughterhouse in San Juan City has been padlocked for dumping its untreated wastewater into the river that drains to Manila Bay.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu personally led the closure of the Megga Foods and Stockfarm, Inc. a privately-owned abattoir in Baran-

gay Kabayanan.

According to Cimatu, the pollutive impacts of the MFPSI's operations equally poses direct harm to public health and the safety of residents within the area and affect the government's efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

The Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB), an

office of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) issued a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) against MFPSI after it was found to be violating Republic Act No. 9275 or the Clean Water Act of 2004.

Cimatu cited the cooperation of San Juan City Mayor Francisco Javier "Francis" M. Zamora who

joined him during the operation.

Results of an inspection of its wastewater conducted by EMB personnel showed the slaughterhouse failed multiple physical and chemical analyses, including tests for oil and grease, fecal coliform, and phosphate-phosphorous.

Joel dela Torre



NBI files graft charges vs. DENR, BOC personnel

THE National Bureau of Investigation has filed graft charges before the Department of Justice against eight government personnel found liable through a series of acts leading to the illegal importation of solid wastes from Canada.

NBI Director Dante Gierran said upon instruction of Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra, the NBI conducted an investigation and case buildup on the persons responsible for the importation of garbage from Canada.

After almost nine months of exhaustive investigation the NBI-Environmental Crime Division filed on Jan. 17, 2020 graft charges against DENR Undersecretary lawyer Juan Miguel T. Cuna, DENR-Environmental Management Bureau personnel Irvin G. Cadavona, Geri Geronimo R. Sanchez and Renato T. Cruz, and Bureau of Customs personnel Benjamin T. Perez JR., Eufrazio L. Ednaco, Matilda G. Bacongan, Jose A. Saromo.

Based on the foregoing facts and evidence, the above-mentioned suspects were recommended for prosecution before the Office of the Prosecutor General, Department of Justice, for violation of RA 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990) and RA 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act).

Gierran said based on the NBI inves-

tigation, Chronic Plastics Inc., Canada were issued import clearances for its various importation of scrap plastic materials despite its failure to provide all the necessary information needed for the application of their import clearance.

Accordingly, the EMB personnel-in-charge in the processing of the application were remiss in their duties to strictly examine the application, as to the completeness of the required documents and to the required inspection prior to the approval of its registration as importer.

Without the necessary information, the EMB cannot sufficiently determine that Chronic Plastics Inc. is capable of recycling the materials to be imported. However, despite lacking the specific requirement and without inspection being made, the application was still being processed and recommended its approval to the EMB director.

Furthermore, importation consigned to Chronic Plastics Inc. were released despite the questionable importation clearances.

The assigned BoC examiner and appraiser re-routed goods declaration from being tagged as "yellow" to "green" and allowed to proceed to the next process despite its clear violation on DENR. In addition, goods declaration tagged as "red" were also re-routed to "green" despite the same violations. **Willie Casas**



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Charges filed against Canada trash officials

By Alvin Murcia
@tribunephil_atwi

Graft charges have been filed by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) before the Department of Justice (DoJ) against eight government personnel who were found liable through a series of acts leading to the importation of solid wastes from Canada.

Charged before the DoJ are Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Atty. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) personnel Irvin G. Cadavona, Geri Geronimo R. Sanz and Renato T. Cruz and Bureau of Customs (BoC) personnel Benjamin Perez Jr., Eufrazio L. Ednaco, Matilda G. Bacongán and Jose A. Saromo.

NBI director Dante Gierran said, upon the instruction of DoJ Secretary Menardo Guevarra, the NBI conducted an investigation and case buildup on the persons responsible for the importation of garbage from Canada.

It took the NBI nine months of exhaustive investigation before the NBI-Environmental Crime Division filed the graft charges on 17 January.

Gierran said, based on the NBI probe, Chronic Plastics Inc.

Canada was issued import clearances for its various importation of scrap plastic materials despite its failure to provide all the necessary information needed for the application of its import clearances.

The EMB personnel was in charge in the processing of the application as to the completeness of the required documents and to the required inspection prior to the approval of its registration as importer.

Without the necessary information, the EMB cannot sufficiently determine that Chronic Plastics Inc. was capable of recycling the materials to be imported.

Despite the lack of the specific requirement and without an inspection being made, the application was still processed and recommended for approval to the EMB director.

The importation consigned to Chronic Plastics Inc. was released despite the questionable importation clearances.

The assigned BoC examiner and appraiser rerouted the goods declaration from being tagged as "yellow" to "green" and allowed to proceed to the next process despite its clear violation of DENR regulations.

In addition, goods declaration tagged as "red" were also rerouted to "green" despite the same violation.



Environment, customs official and staff charged over Canada waste

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has filed graft charges against eight government officials and staff who were found liable for the illegal importation of solid wastes from Canada. Among those charged are Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Juan Miguel T. Cuna, and DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) personnel Irvin G. Cadavona, Geri Geronimo R. Sanez and Renato T. Cruz. The four others are Bureau of Customs (BoC) personnel Benjamin T. Perez Jr., Eufracio L. Ednaco, Matilda G. Bacongan and Jose A. Saromo. NBI Director Dante A. Gierran, in a statement, said those accused are linked to the issuance of import clearances for scrap plastic materials to Chronic Plastics, Inc., Canada despite the company's failure to provide all the necessary information needed for the clearance application. "The EMB personnel-in-charge in the processing of the application was remiss in their duties to strictly examine the application, as to the completeness of its required documents and to the required inspection prior to the approval of its registration as importer," Mr. Gierran said. He also said that the assigned BoC examiner and appraiser allowed the imports to proceed to the next process despite its "clear violation on DENR." The charges are based on Republic Act 6969 or the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990, and Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. In 2013 and 2014, 69 shipping containers mislabeled as carrying recycled materials from Canada were delivered to the Philippines. The shipments contained household wastes, including plastic bottles and used diapers. In May 2019, the containers were shipped back to Canada.

— Genshen L. Espedillo



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NBI files charges over Canada trash case

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has filed graft charges against officials and personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) and Bureau of Customs (BOC) over the shipment of 103 container vans of garbage from Canada in 2013. Implicated in the graft case were: former EMB director Juan Miguel Cuna; EMB personnel Irvin Cadavona, Geri Geronimo Sanez and Rehato Cruz; and BOC personnel Benjamin Perez Jr., Eufrazio Ednaco, Matilda Bacongan and Jose Saromo. —NIKKA G. VALENZUELA



8 gov't personnel charged over Canadian wastes

BY ASHZEL HACHERO

THE National Bureau of Investigation yesterday filed graft charges against eight government personnel, including an undersecretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in connection with the importation of solid wastes from Canada from 2013 to 2014 that became the subject of a diplomatic spat between Manila and Ottawa.

Charged before the Justice Department were DENR undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna, DENR-Environmental Management Bureau personnel Irvin Cadavona, Geri Geronimo Sanez and Renato Cruz, plus four Bureau of Customs personnel identified as Benjamin Perez Jr. Matilda Bacongan, Jose Saromo and Euracio Ednaco.

The Customs personnel were assigned at the Formal Entry Division of the Manila International Container Port as examiners and appraisers. They were sued for violation of Re-

public Act 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990) and Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft Corrupt Practices Act.

The waste material, composed of a mixture of paper, plastics, electronics and household trash, including diapers and kitchen trash, was shipped from Canada in batches, eventually totaling 103 containers through the local counterpart of the Ontario, Canada-based exporter Chronic Plastics Incorporated. They were declared as plastic scraps.

The NBI said based on their investigation, Chronic Plastics Inc. was issued import clearances for its various importation of scrap plastic materials despite its failure to provide all the necessary information needed for the application of its import clearances.

NBI Environment Crime Division Eric Nuqui told reporters they had previously filed criminal cases against private individuals involved

in the importation of the Canadian wastes, particularly the importer and consignee, referring to the charges for violation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and the 1995 Basel Convention on the Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and Disposal against Chronic's local counterpart, the Valenzuela city-based Chronic Plastics Inc. before the Manila regional trial court.

Nuqui said they conducted additional investigation based on an order issued by Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra to determine the liability of government personnel and other individuals involved in the importation of the Canadian wastes.

In June 2016, Manila RTC Branch 1 Judge Tita Bughao Alisuag ordered the wastes shipped back to Canada at the expense of the importer.

After protracted negotiations between Manila and Ottawa, the garbage was finally shipped back to Canada in June last year.



8 DENR, BOC off'l kinasuhan sa basura ng Canada

Sinampahan ng National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) sa Department of Justice (DOJ) ang walong personnel ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Bureau of Customs (BOC) na sangkot sa ilegal na importasyon ng basura sa Canada.

"The application and approval of the importation papers were only processed after the container vans containing hazardous materials from

Canada had already arrived," ayon kay NBI Environmental Crime Division head Eric Nuqui.

Sa imbestigasyon ng NBI, inisyuhan ng import clearance ang Chronic Plastics Inc., Canada noong Hulyo 1, 16 at 17, 2013 para sa hazardous waste isang buwan matapos na dumating sa bansa ang unang batch ng container sa Manila International Container Terminal (MICT).

Alinsunod sa batas,

dapat nang i-apply ang import clearance 30 araw bago dumating ang shipment ng mga recyclable material.

Nabatid kay NBI Director Dante A. Gierran, matapos silang atasan ni Justice Secretary Medardo Guevarra, na mag-sagawa ng imbestigasyon at case build up, napatunayan na may ebidensiya laban sa mga personnel na sina DENR Undersecretary Atty. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, DENR-Environ-

mental Management Bureau personnel Irvin G. Cadavona, Geri Geronomo R. Sanez at Renato T. Cruz, at sina BOC personnel Benjamin T. Perez Jr., Eufrazio L. Ednaco, Matilda G. Bacongan, at Jose A. Saromo.

Nabatid sa EMB personnel in-charge, sa pag-proseso ng aplikasyon ay hindi tumugon sa kanilang tungkulin ang mga nabanggit na i-examine nang mabuti kung kumpleto ang dokumento.

Ang importation clearance ng Chronic Plastics, Inc. ay ini-release umano sa kabila ng kuwestiyunableng importation clearance.

Inirekomenda ng NBI sa Office of the Prosecutor General, Department of Justice, ang pagsasampag kasong paglabag sa RA 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990) at RA 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act). **(Nancy Carvajal/Juliet de Loza-Cudia)**



'Graft' vs 8 DENR at BOC personnel sa imported basura

SINAMPAHAN na ng National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) sa Department of Justice (DOJ) ang walong personnel ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Bureau of Customs (BOC) na sangkot sa iligal na importasyon ng basura mula Canada.

Nabatid kay NBI Director Dante A. Gierran, matapos silang atasan ni Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra na magsagawa ng imbestigasyon at case build up, napatunayan na may ebidensiya laban kina DENR Undersecretary Atty. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, DENR-Environmental Management Bureau personnel Irvin G. Cadavona, Geri Geronimo R. Sanz at Rento T. Cruz, at BOC personnel Benjamin T. Perez Jr., Eufrazio L. Ednaco, Matilda G. Bacongan at Jose A. Saromo.

Sa imbestigasyon ng NBI, nag-isyu ang Chronic Plastics Inc., Canada ng import clearances para sa importasyon ng ilang scrap plastic materials sa kabila na nabigo itong magsumite ng kinakailangang impormasyon para sa aplikasyon sa kanilang import clearance.

Nabatid sa EMB personnel in-charge na sa pagproseso ng aplikasyon ay hindi tumugon sa kanilang tungkulin na i-examine na mabuti kung kumpleto ang dokumento.

Gayundin, ang importation clearance ng Chronic Plastics, Inc. ay ini-release sa kabila ng kuwestiyonable ang importation clearances.

Ang nakatalagang BOC examiner at appraiser ay iniba ang goods declaration mula sa "yellow" na ginawang "green" at pinayagan ang susunod na proseso sa kabila ng malinaw na violation sa DENR.

Dapat umano na ang mga EMB personnel, na kinasuhan ay inobliga ang Chronic Plastics Inc. na magbigay ng kaukulang impormasyon at dokumento para masuportahan ang kanilang aplikasyon.

Samantala, ang mga kinasuhan na BOC personnel na nakatalaga sa Formal Entry Division ng Manila International Container Port bilang mga examiner at appraiser ay dapat napansin na ito noong nagsasagawa pa lamang ng eksaminasyon sa dokumento, ang kuwestiyonableng importation clearance ibinigay ng Chronic Plastics Inc.

Inirekomenda ng NBI sa Office of the Prosecutor General, Department of Justice, ang pagsasamapa ng kasong paglabag sa RA 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990) at RA 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act). **(Andi Garcia)**



Ilocos Norte gets P25.5m for waste recycling facility

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau in Region 1 has granted P25.5 million to the provincial government of Ilocos Norte to fund the construction of a plastic recycling and resource recovery facility at Barangay Imelda, Marcos town.

On Jan. 22, Gov. Matthew Marcos Manotoc signed a memorandum of agreement with EMB Regional Director Engineer Maria Dorica Naz-Hipe to officially turn over the funds.

Naz-Hipe applauded the initiative of the province, saying: "Ilocos Norte is one of the very few provinces that has received a sum like this under the administration of President [Rodrigo] Duterte."

"We congratulate you for having availed this assistance, and we do hope that it will be a successful project. We hope this project becomes a model for other local government units to replicate, even in other regions," she added.

The P20 million of the assistance is allocated for the construction of the facility, while the remaining P5.5 million is for the procurement of several equipment.

"We will also be supplementing that [cash assistance] with some of our own machines that we will purchase to complete the facility," Marcos Manotoc shared.

PGIN will procure a sewage vacuum truck, a shredding machine with conveyor, and a pulverizing machine with conveyor, he added.



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Vizcaya hands out 141 garbage bins to elementary schools

By Ben Moses Ebreo

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—The provincial government here recently distributed free garbage bins to public elementary schools in the province to promote proper solid waste management practices.

Forester Tito Tanguilig, the provincial environment and natural resources officer, said 141 bins are being handed out by the provincial government to various public elementary schools under the "*Basura Itapon, Dapat Ayusin—Kikita Ka na, Iwas Sakit at Dagdag Allowance Pa* (BIDA KA KID)" program.

The free distribution of bins was announced during the Environmental Awareness Month celebration of the province in November last year to

equip public elementary school with garbage receptacles to institutionalize the practice and observance of Solid Waste Management among school children.

"The BIDA KA KID Program seeks to teach school children on proper SWM disposal so that it becomes part of their habit as they grow and become responsible solid waste managers in their respective communities," Tanguilig said.

He said the recipient schools of the free bins are in the towns of Bayombong, Aritao, Diadi, Quezon, Sta. Fe, Villaverde and Dupax del Sur.

The BIDA KA KID Program was started in 2014 as a component of the Solid Waste Management Program implementation in the province.



SC pursues its decision on Manila Bay cleanup

By REY G. PANALIGAN

The Supreme Court (SC) has reconstituted its Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC) which is tasked to monitor the

implementation of its 2008 decision that directed practically all government agencies, including those in law enforcement, to speed up the cleanup, restoration, and preservation of Manila Bay.

Chief Justice Diosdado M. Peralta, who is the chairperson of the MBAC, said the new members are SC Associate Justice Edgardo L. Delos Santos, Court Administrator Jose Midas P. Mar- **▶8**

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quez, and SC Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda as vice chairperson and working chairperson.

Peralta announced the new members of the MBAC during the 2nd Manila Bay Task Force Principal's Meeting and Conference at the Diamond Hotel in Manila.

The Chief Justice said the "MBAC's main function is to maintain the mandate of the continuing mandamus and to enable the Court to verify the reports of the government agencies tasked to clean up the Manila Bay."

"The idea is not just to comply with this tall order, but to ensure that we are on track by way of periodic updates on our progress. Concededly, this could take years, but this duty is ours in the present, and we will not relent," he stressed.

More than 10 years ago, the SC ordered several agencies of the government to undertake a speedy cleanup, restoration, and preservation of Manila Bay.

To assure compliance with its ruling, the SC even issued a continuing mandamus – an order that compels the agencies of the government to perform acts which the laws specifically require them to do or to comply as duties emanating from the nature and mandate of their offices.

Directed to undertake immediate action on the Manila Bay problem are the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA).

These government agencies were directed by the SC to submit quarterly progressive report of the activities undertaken in accordance with the decision.

Earlier, the SC had created a com-

mittee, then chaired by the now retired Associate Justice Presbitero J. Velasco Jr. – who wrote the landmark decision – with Court Administrator Marquez as vice chair, to monitor the implementation of the ruling.

Legal circles said that is only now that the government, under President Duterte, started decisive efforts to comply with the SC's landmark decision.

President Duterte has approved a seven-year plan to cleanup Manila Bay. The efforts would cost the government about ₱4.7 billion.

"In the light of the ongoing environmental degradation, the court wishes to emphasize the extreme necessity for all concerned executive departments and agencies to immediately act and discharge their respective official duties and obligations," the SC said in its 2008 decision as it pointed out that "time is of the essence."

"Hence, there is a need to set timetables for the performance and completion of the tasks, some of them as defined for them by law and the nature of their respective offices and mandates," it stressed.

The Manila Bay degradation issue started on Jan. 29, 1999 when Concerned Residents of Manila Bay filed a complaint before the regional trial court (RTC) in Imus, Cavite against several government agencies for the cleanup, rehabilitation, and protection of the Manila Bay.

The residents told the trial court that "the water quality of the Manila Bay had fallen way below the allowable standards set by law, specifically Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1152 or the Philippine Environment Code."

Section 17 of PD 1152 states that "where the quality of water has deteriorated to a degree where its state will adversely affect its best usage, the government agencies concerned shall take such measures as may be necessary to upgrade the quality of such water to meet the prescribed water quality standards."

On the other hand, Section 20 of the decree, states that "... it shall be the responsibility of the polluter to contain,

remove and clean up water pollution incidents at his own expense. In case of his failure to do so, the government agencies concerned shall undertake containment, removal and clean up operations and expenses incurred in said operations shall be charged against the persons and/or entities responsible for the pollution."

On Sept. 13, 2002, the trial court ruled in favor of the residents and directed several government agencies "to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay and restore its waters... to make it fit for swimming, skin-diving and other forms of contact recreation."

The agencies, with DENR as the lead, were directed within six months from the date of the decision "to act and perform their respective duties by devising a consolidated, coordinated and concerted scheme of action for the rehabilitation and restoration of the bay."

In 2005, the Court of Appeals (CA) upheld the trial court's decision. The CA ruled: "The decision rendered by the trial court does not require defendants-appellants to do task outside their usual functions. They are merely directed to come up with consolidated and coordinated efforts, each performing its basic functions, in rehabilitating and cleaning-up the waters of Manila Bay."

Led by the MMDA, the agencies appealed the CA decision before the SC.

Earlier in 1993, the SC – in a decision written by retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. – had granted the class suit filed by 44 children, through their parents, to stop the deforestation in the country for their generation as well as those generations yet unborn.

The children wanted the DENR to cancel all timber licenses agreement and to desist from issuing new ones as they invoked their right to a balanced and healthful ecology.

In granting the right of the children to sue, the SC ruled that "children had the legal standing to file the case based on the concept of 'intergenerational responsibility,' as their right to a healthy environment carried with it an obligation to preserve that environment for the succeeding generations."

The SC's ruling on the case of the children became a global landmark decision that has been invoked in several



SC committee to monitor Bay rehab

By Rey E. Requejo

THE Supreme Court has reconstituted the Manila Bay Advisory Committee, which is tasked to monitor the implementation of its 2008 decision that directed concerned government agencies, including those in law enforcement, to speed up the cleanup, restoration, and preservation of Manila Bay.

Chief Justice Diosdado M. Peralta, who serves as the chairperson of the MBAC, said the new members are SC Associate Justice Edgardo L. De los Santos, Court Administrator Jose

Midas P. Marquez, and SC Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda as vice chairperson and working chairperson.

The chief magistrate made the announcement of the new members of the

MBAC during the 2nd Manila Bay Task Force Principal's Meeting and Conference at the Diamond Hotel in Manila.

"MBAC's main function is to maintain the mandate of the continuing mandamus and to enable the Court to verify the reports of the government agencies tasked to clean up the Manila Bay," Peralta said.

"The idea is not just to comply with this tall order, but to ensure that we are on track by way of periodic updates on our progress. Concededly, this could take years, but this duty is

ours in the present, and we will not relent," he added.

In 2008, the SC issued a writ of continuing mandamus enjoining several government agencies to undertake a speedy cleanup, restoration, and preservation of Manila Bay.

The writ of a continuing mandamus is a Court order that compels the agencies of the government to perform acts which the laws specifically require them to do or to comply as duties emanating from the nature and mandate of their offices.

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SC reconstitutes Manila Bay council

The Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC), which is tasked to monitor the implementation of the 2008 decision that directed all government agencies, including the law enforcement, to speed up the cleanup, restoration and preservation of Manila Bay, has been reconstituted by the Supreme Court (SC).

The new MBAC members are SC Associate Justice Edgardo de los Santos, Court Administrator Jose Midas Marquez and SC Associate Justice Rodil Zalameda as vice chairman and working chairman, with Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta as chairman.

The top magistrate announced the new MBAC members during the Second Manila Bay Task Force Principal's Meeting and Conference at the Manila Diamond Hotel.

He said, the "MBAC's main function is to maintain the mandate of the continuing mandamus and to enable the Court to verify the reports of the government agencies tasked to clean up The Manila Bay."

"The idea is not just to comply with this tall order, but to ensure that we are on track by way of periodic updates on our progress. Concededly, this could take years, but this duty is ours in the present, and we will not relent," Peralta stressed.

The SC, more than 10 years ago, ordered several agencies of the government to undertake a speedy cleanup, restoration, and preservation of Manila Bay.

To assure compliance with its ruling, the SC even issued a continuing *mandamus* – an order that compels the agencies of the government to perform acts, which the laws specifically require them to do or to comply as duties emanating from the nature and mandate of their offices.

Those tasked to take immediate action on the Manila Bay problem are the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Education, Health, Public Works and Highways, Budget and Management, and Interior and Local Government, Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group and Philippine Ports Authority.

These government agencies were directed by the SC to submit quarterly progressive report of the activities undertaken in accordance with the decision.

A committee was earlier created by the SC, then chaired by the now retired Associate Justice Presbitero J. Velasco Jr. – who wrote the landmark decision – with Court Administrator Marquez as vice chair, to monitor the implementation of the ruling.

A. Murcia

Problematic Manila waterways challenge 23 young innovators

THE transformation of Manila's urban waterways into dump sites and residential areas for informal settlers posed a challenge of 23 budding innovators from the country's leading architecture schools gathered to create a design solution that would hopefully address the issue.

The group was comprised of innovators Philip Nathan Jude Sy from the University of the Philippines Diliman; Marcelo Luteria, Al John Carl Ramos, and Francis Gester Fernandez from the Adamson University; Frances Abigail Vinluan, Rovianne Santiago, Michael Angelo Reyes, Leslie Anne Vital, Hana

Richelle Tan, Maria Julia Andrei Malicdem, Marielle Joy Villamayor, Oscar Kevin Castro, and Jianne Libunao from the University of Santo Tomas; and Jon Russell Sy, Sebastian Francisco, Giuseppe Luigi Abcede, Katrina Ruiz, Louie Nathaniel Kiu, Noelle Alido, Eunice Miracle Clemente, Carla Andrea Rosario, Matthew Jonathan Gan, and Liam Anthony Tangan from the De La Salle -College of Saint Benilde.

They were mentored by a panel of industry practitioners and educators including bamboo architecture expert and consultant Christian Salandanan, UP Architecture's Gerard Joşon and Benilde's

Lyle La Madrid, Harry Serrano, Joel Deocaris, Cesar Concio III and Arnold Rañada.

The team took an intensive two-week Global Summer School, an international platform defined by multi-scalar investigation on the implications of emergent techniques in planned environments.

The Manila node, explored advanced design and fabrication techniques through parametric software and digital fabrication tools. The architects-in-the-making tackled the challenges in designing complex structures and how parametric software can help rationalize the construction process.

The students maximized their skills and came up with a prototype using bamboo and digitally fabricated bamboo connectors, a simulation of their desired solution – a large scale parametrically designed pavilion that will connect the two existing bridges together and will serve as a common ground where people can play, eat, and hang-out.

With the help of plastic drums and 250 bamboo poles, the students were able to manually transform their design concept into one-fourths of the actual output and placed the base platform and the first segments above the waters.



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Bacoor's Bay projects hit all targets

BACOOR CITY – This city is hitting four birds in one stone with its planned reclamation projects along Manila Bay.

Mayor Lani Mercado-Revilla stressed that aside from keeping thousands of informal settlers' families (ISF) living along the bay from harms' way, the proposed 420-hectare reclamation projects can also boost the ongoing clean-up of Manila Bay.

Jobs will also be generated as many companies are expected to come in once the projects are completed.

Bacoor City has, in fact, received a gold award from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in recognition of its significant accomplishments in compliance with President Rodrigo Duterte's directive to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

Revilla noted the failure of previous efforts to clean up the Manila Bay despite around P50 billion

having spent for the past projects.

"We think that reclamation will be the best long-term solution particularly in the Cavite area," Revilla said.

Revilla stressed that better housing and communities await the ISF from 10 barangays that will be impacted by the development project.

The mayor said the local government has already identified in-city relocation sites for the ISF – meaning they will remain within Bacoor City.

Revilla pointed out that the city is readying two resettlement sites for the ISF and fishermen living along coastal areas.

"This is one of the few reclamation projects in the Philippines that will have in-city relocation," she pointed out.

"As mayor, I am giving my commitment that all ISF will have better housing," Revilla added.

The commitment was also in line with Mr. Duterte's directive of "no

demolition without relocation."

Mr. Duterte's order, as well as the National Economic Development Authority's "Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan" identified the need to relocate informal settlements along Manila Bay area as one of the major actions necessary for the success of the Manila Bay clean up drive.

The proposed 420-hectare Bacoor reclamation projects received overwhelming support from residents and various stakeholders during a public hearing last 9 January.

The city government of Bacoor is the proponent of the reclamation projects, namely Bacoor Reclamation and Development Project, consisting of a total of 320-hectare islands, and the Diamond Reclamation and Development Project consisting of one 100-hectare island via Public-Private Partnership under the PPP Code of Bacoor.



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Gold for Bacoor The City, represented by Bacoor Mayor Lani Mercado-Revilla, receives the Gold Award from the Department of the Interior and Local Government for its Manila Bay Clean-up Rehabilitation and Preservation Program and LGU Compliance Assessment. The trophy was presented by DILG Provincial Director Lionel Dalope, DILG Cluster Head Celia Martal, CLGOO Norma Corpuz, LGOO Brian Ballon, Manila Bay Program Officers Don Paolo Teodoro at Kristel Cale Francisco, DENR-PENRO Judaline Fabro, and DENRO-PENRO Aileen Joy Eslamo.

BACoor CITY GOVERNMENT



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Save Manila Bay



THE good news, in so far as the environment is concerned, is the determined effort of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to prioritize the rehabilitation of Manila Bay from now until 2022.

No less than Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said recently that the rehabilitation of Manila Bay will remain the DENR's top priority in the next two-and-a-half years. This, I think, is a step in the right direction.

Cimatu chairs the Manila Bay Task Force. He is assisted in this huge undertaking by DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Concerns Benny D. Antiporda, who is on top of the day-to-day operations of the task force.

Cimatu wants to make Manila Bay's waters fit for swimming by the time President Duterte steps down in 2022. This is one of the concrete targets that the DENR hopes to achieve in its bid to win the "Battle for Manila Bay."

The rehabilitation of Manila Bay follows close on the heels of the successful rehab campaign in Boracay that took six months to complete, and plans to undertake similar rehabilitation programs in other tourism areas in the country, including Baguio, the country's summer capital.

Cimatu is finding out that rehabilitating a heavily polluted body of water is a very difficult task. But he really wants to make a difference and restore water in the historic bay to its once-pristine condition.

Ever since the Manila Bay rehabilitation kicked off with the launch of the "Battle for Manila Bay" in Jan. 26 last year, Cimatu recognizes that "much more needs to be done" to meet the end-goal of making it fit again for

swimming and other purposes.

What has the DENR achieved so far?

Cimatu has reported to Malacañang that "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 ongoing rehabilitation program is now on its first phase or the cleanup and water quality monitoring phase.

“What has the DENR achieved so far?”

The MBTF has identified 44,125 informal settler families living within the Manila Bay area. A total of 51 families, particularly those situated along Estero de San Antonio de Abad, have already been relocated to Caloocan City.

Apart from these, the task force has delineated 547 kilometers of easements in the National Capital Region and in Central Luzon.

As of Sept. 26 last year, the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau and the Laguna Lake Development Authority had 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 2019, close to 70,000 volunteers from the NCR, Central Luzon and Calabarzon have collected over 2.3 million kilograms of waste through cleanups, trash boats and garbage traps. That's an awful amount of garbage.

The task force has already monitored a total of 70 stations in the Manila Bay area. This includes 31 bathing beaches, 18 river mouths, 16 drainage outfalls, and five rivers.

To improve the ecosystem, the

Turn to A5



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Save...

From A4

DENR led the planting of native and fruit-bearing tree seedlings as well as mangroves.

It is true that rehabilitation of Manila Bay requires the participation and support of the people themselves. Thus, the department is also

implementing and information and education campaign (IEC) on the importance of rehabilitating this body of water. So far, the task force has already conducted over 120 seminars, training, and activities with a total of 8,100 participants.

The DENR has also published 3,574 printed materials on the ongoing rehabilitation, as well as nine information campaigns and 43 up-

dates 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.

The next two phases will involve the massive relocation of informal settlers plus more rehabilitation works and the all-important education, protection and sustainability component of the campaign.

I recall that in the early 60s, city

residents didn't need to go very far to beat the summer heat. They simply had to take a jeepney to Roxas Boulevard to go swimming. OK, so Boomers had a grand time enjoying Nature that was within reach decades ago, but millennials can probably catch up if the DENR succeeds in its gargantuan task soon enough.

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Let's go REIT

On Monday, this chronicler joined a group of opinion writers/columnists in a round-table discussion on the newest financial investment instrument on the block, the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT).

Secretary of Finance Carlos "Sonny" Dominguez was in high spirits as he entered the function room on the seventh floor of the newly retrofitted Department of Finance (DOF) building. He came in relatively unnoticed as our designated seats, with our back at the entrance, faced the bay window. We had a view of the beautiful expanse of Manila Bay horizon.

Secretary Sonny was proud of the renovations. "Have you seen our gym," he asked. He ushered us to the nearby room full of expensive health wellness equipment. The discourse on the benefit analysis of REIT was at its interesting phase, when SecFin declared a five-minute ceasefire for his guests to savor the beauty of the famous Manila Bay sunset.

During the exchanges, he said, he waited for 40 long years before rice tariffication became a law last year. Back in 1989 during President Corazon C. Aquino's administration, SecFin Sonny was wearing the agriculture portfolio hat. I was beaten 40 years ago."

The investment potentials for this newest financial instrument on the market block are immense both from the perspective of investors and the real estate firms. The government will benefit as well, since one of the conditionalities include that the funding raised must be invested in the country, including infrastructure.

REIT can enhance further the development of the country's capital market as it widens investors profile by getting into fold first-generation overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), who are already done sending their children to school, building their dream abode, and have extra money for investment.

BDO Chief market analyst Jonas Ravelas said it is a "timely investment instrument" for moneyed OFWs as well as those with extra income to spare. The yield could even be better than placing funds in time deposit due to the current low-interest-rate regime and monetary easing and further

reduction in reserve requirements remain a possibility.

For real property developers and owners, the cliché "have your cake and eat it, too" is applicable. This is relative to the incentive provided in the law that allows property owners and/or developers to package their fixed assets into REIT, and list in the stock market. It's a fund-raising activity and, at the same time, an avenue for the developers to "mark-to-market" their real estate assets.

While the Philippine Stock Exchange awaits the maiden REIT public offering, I believed concerned agencies should now prepare to embark on a campaign, going around the countryside to attract prospective investors.



BUSINESS CORRIDOR

FIL C. SIONIL

Help update: Assistance to hundreds of families victimized by the eruption of Taal Volcano keeps pouring in. Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) is giving its clients, whose families and businesses were severely affected by the Taal eruption, time flexibility to settle their monthly obligation, initially for 30 days without penalties and accrued interest. The delay in payments includes their credit card liabilities.

San Miguel Corporation, its subsidiaries, and affiliates mobilized their resources to assist in the on going relief efforts. On top of the millions of pesos worth of relief items, the conglomerate said its "civic-minded employees" have given their time and resources to our own relief efforts."

Victory Liner donated a bus that Rotary District 3830 converted into a soup kitchen to cook hot meals for residents of the affected communities. And the Manila Bulletin management extended its helping hand Sunday to the families in areas hit by the fury of Taal. As of this writing she seems to be in an eerie silent mood. It's a dangerous lull before another disruptive eruption occurs.

These are not just one-time activities. According to San Miguel President Ramon Ang, "We're committed to continue helping our countrymen and doing more for them."

Salute!

Talkback to me at sionil731@gmail.com



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SAP joins collective action for cleaner ocean by 2030

SAP has announced that it has joined the World Economic Forum's Global Plastic Action Partnership community, which is determined to create a cleaner ocean by 2030.

Reducing the amount of plastics entering the ocean requires cross-industry collaboration armed with data and intelligent technologies. To support this, SAP is planning to launch the next phase of its Plastics Cloud to allow businesses to shift rapidly to alternatives to single-use plastics, scale design for circularity, invest in materials collection infrastructure and ensure a better consumer experience.

"SAP is committed to a significantly cleaner ocean by 2030," said Christian Klein, Co-CEO and Member of the Executive Board, SAP SE. "We want to achieve this objective together with customers, NGOs, governments and partners and will provide them with the tools, insights and solutions to eliminate waste and maximize resource pro-

ductivity. Many of our customers have also made commitments to a cleaner planet. We will support them in achieving their ambitious goals, and together we can accelerate the move to a restorative and regenerative economy."

Underscoring this, SAP has updated the Plastics Cloud to help companies produce products more responsibly by providing global insights to enable better understanding about what materials are used and their fates. This support will be based on local recycling infrastructures and policies in each city, region and country. It will allow them to calculate more accurately the environmental and business impact of using more recycled or reusable materials and packaging. SAP software systems also help companies adapt to changing regulations, such as extended producer responsibility policies, and stay current with local markets, global standards and best practices.



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Will a water crisis come after the Taal eruption?

Because of climate change, a water crisis will follow our volcano crisis. Climate change is the cause of what we are seeing today. On the same day that Taal erupted, 23 other volcanoes did so globally. The water crisis is also happening around the world. Wars are now being fought over scarce water.

I ended my role as secretary general of the joint legislature-executive-private sector steering committee for the Water Roadmap and Summit on the Water Day Summit on March 22, 2019. I was glad that 90 percent of our recommendations were approved in a speech that day from the Office of the President delivered by Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles.

These recommendations were submitted by the committee members from the legislature (Senate and House of Representatives), the executive branch (primarily DENR, DA, DILG, DPWH, Neda and Cabinet secretary), and the private sector (Agri-Fisheries Alliance and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry). Private sector contributions came from cluster coordinators such as former Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun, Agriculture Secretary William Dar, Dondi Alipala, and Chris Ilagan.

Effectively managing the secretariat was director Bill David of the National Water Resource Board. Coordinating the seven water volumes, each signed by a University of the Philippines Los Baños dean (with input from seven presummits held nationwide on different water aspects) was chair Patricia Sanchez of the UPLB Interdisciplinary Studies

COMMENTARY

ERNESTO M. ORDOÑEZ

Center for Water.

Nograles started his speech with a line from Joni Mitchell's song: "Don't it always have to go that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." He then said that we have taken water for granted, even though water is more precious than food and electricity. Three committee recommendations were made substantial parts of President Duterte's direction:

- The President will submit proposed legislation for an apex water body with an accompanying water regulatory organization. This will solve the main problem of little coordination among the 32 government water-related agencies. In the meantime, an executive order will provide better coordination. It has already been approved by the Cabinet's economic cluster and would soon become an executive order.

- Water harvesting will be implemented for government structures and new establishments of the private sector (e.g. subdivisions). In addition, water collection and encatchment systems, as well as household rainwater harvesting, will be carried out. This will address our dismal 4 percent rain harvesting rate, compared to India's 60 percent in many areas.

- Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) will finally be implemented to address the problem of uncoordinated water initiatives. IWRM is used very

successfully by many countries using public-private sector River Basin Management Councils. Unfortunately, even for 2020, the councils for our 18 strategic major river basins will get an average of less than P2 million each. With a bigger budget, they can mobilize the billions in the budgets of government agencies in their areas for the currently missing integrated approach.

The steering committee stopped its work because the executive order on water management was announced to be signed in a few days. Unfortunately, this has not happened.

While some improvement has been seen, it is far from enough to effectively address our water crisis. Legislation is being discussed, but will take time. Urgent action is needed that can be provided by the executive order on water that has long been delayed.

Today, there are more than 55 people who die daily from water-related causes, 12 million without access to clean water, 300 out of 1,500 municipalities waterless, 5.7 million denuded forest hectares, 300,000 lost mangroves, and water that is not saved and even used carelessly. Climate change makes things worse with more droughts and floods. Decisive action must immediately be taken. Otherwise, the volcano crisis will be followed by a more widespread water crisis. **INQ**

The author is Agriwatch chair, former Secretary of Presidential Programs and Projects and former undersecretary of Agriculture and Trade and Industry. Contact him via agriwatch_phil@yahoo.com



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More projects needed to save rainwater

In accordance with the annual progression of seasons in the Philippines, we will soon be in the middle of the hot rainless summer months. Last year, we had people in the Manila Water-served eastern part of Metro Manila lining up with pails for water from firetrucks as the water in Angat Dam hit emergency levels and the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System (MWSS) limited the supply of water to the area. The rains started falling only in June, filling Angat Dam to its normal levels.

During the hot months, several decisions were made to help avert another water shortage. The government approved the revival of the Wawa Dam to add its supply to that of the Angat Dam. A new Kaliwa Dam will be built in Quezon and Rizal provinces with Chinese government assistance. This had long been opposed on the ground that it would inundate the communities of native Dumagat-Remontados, but President Duterte said they will be assisted in moving to new sites, as the greater need of water for Metro Manila must be met.

In Congress, bills were filed to help solve this annual water supply problem. One filed by Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte calls on land developers to provide for rainwater-saving systems to help meet the worsening water problem.

The new dams with their treatment and delivery systems will take years to complete. Kaliwa Dam, in particular, will be ready only in 2023. Thus this year and next year, we may have the same problem as last year, unless we can rush smaller projects such as drilling of more deep wells and tapping Laguna de Bay.

Last Sunday, we featured a rainwater harvesting partnership program between Hyundai

Motor Co. of Korea and Tanay, Rizal, initiated by the HARI Foundation. For two years now, the project has been processing rainwater which is now being distributed in various barangays. "We should pursue the project to bring clean water to more communities," HARI Foundation President Maria Fe Perez Agudo said. She hopes to spread the success of the project to other parts of the country.

Rainwater harvesting is actually an ancient practice, with cisterns to store water dated to 40,000 BC found in the Levant in Southwest Asia. Many ancient cisterns have also been discovered in Israel and the nearby island of Crete, in farming communities in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran dated to 300 BC. Rainwater harvesting was said to be common during the ancient Roman Empire.

Today some communities have started implementing rainwater harvesting systems in Canada, India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, South Africa, United Kingdom, China, Argentina, and Brazil. In the Irrawaddy Delta of Myanmar where the ground water is saline, many communities rely on rainwater ponds for drinking water in the dry season.

Rains fill our dams, including Angat, which is our main source of water in Metro Manila, but the fast-growing population has led to shortages in the summer months. Meanwhile, most of our rainwater continues to be wasted, flooding our lowlands before flowing out to sea.

We really should save more of it, not only with our dams, but also with other working systems such as the program initiated by HARI Foundation with Korea's Hyundai company now serving the people of Tanay, Rizal.



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Panelo allays investors' fears on contract review

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Investors need not be afraid of President Duterte's efforts to look into government contracts with businesses as long as their deals are aboveboard, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said that while the administration has the duty to look after public interest, it would uphold the sanctity of contracts that comply with the law.

"There is nothing to worry on the part of the businessmen, whether foreign or local, because the government will

not be reckless to step into any contract that is not contrary to law," Panelo said at a press briefing.

"You don't have to worry about the review because if there is nothing (unlawful about) your contracts, there is nothing to worry about.

The President will certainly respect the sanctity of contracts except only when (there are) provisions (that appear) to be contrary to law, contrary to public interest and public policy," he said.

Panelo said any pronouncement that the government would examine, evaluate or

review onerous contracts is not something that businessmen should be afraid of "because it is the duty of the government precisely to protect the interest of the Filipino people."

The administration has vowed to look into all business deals signed during previous administrations to determine if there are contracts unfair to the government.

Last month, Duterte slammed water concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad for allegedly "milking Filipinos by the billions."

He threatened to file graft, economic sabotage and plunder

charges against them.

The President said the concession contracts were disadvantageous to the public because they prohibit the government from stopping water rate hikes and allow water firms to collect damages for losses that stem from regulatory actions.

The concession deals with Manila Water and Maynilad - major Metro Manila water distributors - were signed in 1997 and supposed to last for 25 years.

The deals were extended by 15 years in 2009 or 13 years before they were set to expire.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System board has revoked the extension of the concession agreements in compliance with the President's directive.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) wants to finalize new contracts with the two water distribution firms in six months.

The administration is also probing a lease contract between Chevron Philippines and a subsidiary of state-run National Development Corp. that supposedly allowed the energy firm to pay a monthly rental of just 74 centavos per square meter on a 120-hectare

state property in E

Last week, Duterte ordered Manila Water not to go to him from seeking extension contracts or let them arrested indefinitely.

Panelo had clarified that owners of water utilities should be accorded due process.

The Philippine Competition Commission placed 124th place out of 120 countries this year for 2018 in the latest Global Competitiveness Index Group Doing Business survey.

The country's "forcing contracts" index fell from 149th to 151st.



EDITORIAL

Mas maraming proyekto kailangan para maipon ang tubig ulan

BATAY sa taunang paggulong ng mga panahon sa Pilipinas, malapit na tayo sa kalagitnaan ng mainit Batigang na mga buwan ng tag-araw. Noong nakaraang taon, may mga tao sa silanga bahagi ng Metro Manila na pinagsisilbihan ng Manila Water na nagpipila ng kanilang mga timba para makakuha ng tubig mula sa firetrucks dahil umabot sa emergency levels ang tubig sa Angat Dam at nilimitahan ng Metro Manila Waterworks System (MMWS) ang supply ng tubig sa lugar. Nagsimulang pumatak ang mga ulannito lamang Hunyo, pinuno ang Angat Dam hanggang sa normal levels nito.

Sa panahon ng maiinit na buwan, ilang desisyon ang nabuo para makatulong na maiwasan ang isa na namang water shortage. Inaprubahan ng gobyerno ang pagbuhay sa Wawa Dam para magdagdag ang supply nito sa Angat Dam. Itatayo ang bagong Kaliwa Dam sa mga lalawigan ng Quezon at Rizal sa tulong ng Chinese government. Matagal na itong tinututulan sa dahilang babahain nito ang mga komunidad ng mga katutubong Dumagat-Remontados, ngunit sinabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na aayudahan sila sa paglilipat sa mga bagong lugar, dahil kailangang matugunan ang mas malaking pangangailangan ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

Sa Kongreso, inhain ang mga panukalang batas para masolusyunan ang taunang problema sa supply ng tubig. Isa sa mga ito ay ang panukala ni Camarines Sur Rep. L-Ray Villafuerte na nananawagan sa land developers na magkaroon ng rainwater-saving systems para makatulong na matugunan ang lumalalang problema sa tubig.

Abutin ng taon para makumpleto ang mga bagong dams kasama ang kanilang treatment at delivery systems. Partikular na ang Kaliwa Dam ay magiging handa lamang sa 2023. Kayat ngayong taon at sa susunod na taon, maaaring pareho pa rin ang ating problema gaya ng nakaraang taon, maliban na lamang kung maaadaliin natin ang mas malilit na mga proyekto tulad ng drilling ng mas maraming balon at pagkuha ng tubig mula sa Laguna de Bay.

Nitong Linggo, itinampok natin ang rainwater harvesting partnership program sa pagitan ng Hyundai Motor Co. ng Korea at Tanay, Rizal, na inisyatiba ng HARI Foundation. Sa loob ng dalawang taon na ngayon, ang proyekto ay nagpoproseso ng rainwater na ngayon ay ipinamamahagi na sa iba't ibang barangay.

"We should pursue the project to bring clean water to more communities," sinabi ni HARI Foundation President Maria Fe Perez Agudo. Umaasa siya na mapalaganap ang tagumpay ng proyekto sa iba pang lugar sa bansa.

Ang rainwater harvesting ay isang matandang gawain, sa natagpuang cisterns para pag-imbakan ng tubig na may petsang 40,000 BC sa Levant sa Southwest Asia. Maraming antigong cisterns ang nadiskubre rin sa Israel at katabing isla ng Crete, sa farming communities sa Pakistan, Afghanistan, at Iran na may petsang 300 BC. Ang rainwater harvesting ay sinasabing karaniwan sa panahon ng sinaunang Roman Empire.

Ngayon ilang komunidad ang nagsimula nang magpatupad ng rainwater harvesting systems sa Canada, India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, South Africa, United Kingdom, China, Argentina, at Brazil. Sa Irrawaddy Delta ng Myanmar kung saan ang ground water ay saline, maraming komunidad ang umaasa sa rainwater ponds para sa inuming tubig sa panahon ng tag-araw.

Pinupuno ng mga ulan ang ating mga dam, kabilang na ang Angat, na pangunahing pinagmumulan ng tubig sa Metro Manila, ngunit ang mabilis na lumalagong populasyon ay nagdulot ng shortages sa mga buwan ng tag-araw. Samantala, karamihan ng ating tubig ulan ay patuloy na nassayang, bumabaha sa ating mabababang lugar bago dumaloy sa dagat.

Kailangan nating makaipon ng mas marami nito, hindi lamang sa ating mga dam kundi sa iba pang gumaganang sistema tulad ng programang sinimulan ng HARI Foundation katuwang ang Hyundai company ng Korea na ngayon ay nagsisilbi sa mga mamamayan ng Tanay, Rizal.



WHY 'BIOSECURITY' IS IMPORTANT FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

When imagining threats to biodiversity, wildfires, logging, poaching and other visual activities are top-of-mind. But sometimes, the smallest beings do the most damage

By Gregg Yan

Fausto Nowelozo, chief of the Taw'buid tribe, exhales from his worn clay pipe. The sweet scent of wild tobacco envelopes the hut. "It was sickness that drove us down from the mountains. Measles we got from Tagalog visitors. Half our village of 300 died. The survivors moved here to be closer to civilization. Now we constantly need medicine."

We're in Tamisan Dos, one of two newly-established villages flanking a road which leads to the Igit-Baco Natural Park in Occidental Mindoro. In their tongue, *Taw'buid* means 'people from above' because they historically inhabited the island's mountainous interior. Fausto's people are highlanders no more.

Before we push deeper into the park, we leave the old chief some provisions — coffee, sugar, salt and a small bag of medicine.

The danger of disease

When imagining threats to biodiversity, wildfires, logging, poaching and other visual activities are top-of-mind. But sometimes, the smallest beings do the most damage.

Disease is a major killer of isolated tribes. In July of 1837, an American steamboat called the *Saint Peter* infected the Mandau, a North American tribe of about 2000, with smallpox. Three months later, only 23 were left alive.

"Isolated communities are especially vulnerable to diseases from the outside world because immune responses have yet to be developed," says medical anthropologist Dr. Gideon Haso. "Limited access to health care and fear of hospitals also keeps them from seeking treatment."

The Taw'buid are just one of many groups that the Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP) works with in their 40-year-old bid to save the tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*), a well known but critically-endangered buffalo found only in the Philippines. Like native tribes, the tamaraw is highly vulnerable to disease.

Declared by Rinderpest

Once, tamaraw grazed by the thousands. An estimated 10,000 inhabited Mindoro at the turn of the century.

As now, Mindoro then had prime pastureland — so good that ranchers imported thousands of cattle to the island. As grazing competition for the lowlands increased, ranchers started herding their cattle up mountains — the same ones occupied by tamaraw.

In the 1930s, an outbreak of rinderpest took place. A deadly virus which kills 90 percent of what it infects, rinderpest laid waste not just to the population of farmed cattle, but wild tamaraw as well.

By 1960, numbers were estimated to have dropped under 100, prompting the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to declare the species as critically endangered — just one step from extinction.

Decades of conservation led by the TCP, Biodiversity Management Bureau, Mounts Igit-Baco Natural Park (MIBNP) and a host of allies including the



PUNONG Tribo.

GREGG YAN

Resources, Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Incorporated, D'Abadie Foundation, Global Wildlife Conservation, World Wide Fund for Nature, Far Eastern University and Eco Explorations, have helped tamaraw numbers recover to around 600, confined to four isolated areas in Mindoro. All are vulnerable to disease.

"Bovine tuberculosis, hemorrhagic fever and anthrax can enter Mindoro if we're not careful," explains Dr. Mikko Angelo Reyes, a Mindoro-based veterinarian. "The key is biosecurity, the prevention of disease through quarantine, inoculation and immunization. We should ensure that at the

very least, animals entering the island are checked for sickness. We should also establish and respect buffer zones around protected areas, which are often ringed by farms and livestock."

The MIBNP, a former game refuge turned into a protected area, spans 106,655 hectares. It is home to

for space and food, which is why they're setting up more traps, even inside core zones. This is a challenge faced by all protected areas inhabited by people."

The life of a tamaraw ranger is fraught with difficulty — the risk is high, the pay low.

TCP was created to bolster tamaraw conservation efforts in 1979 through Executive Order 544. However, it was set-up as a special project instead of an office, so only its head is a regular employee with benefits.

In 2018, TCP was allotted P4.2 million for operations. This 2019, the budget was slashed to P3.3 million, 75 percent of which goes to personnel salaries, leaving little for operational and field expenses.

Despite the fact that most rangers have put in an average of 10 years' service and stay in the field a month at a time, none of them get benefits despite years of dangerous fieldwork.

A deadly virus which kills 90 percent of what it infects, rinderpest laid waste not just to the population of farmed cattle, but wild tamaraw as well.

"TCP must be institutionalized as an office to secure better pay, permanent tenure and government benefits for its hardworking rangers. Our tamaraw rangers go out against hunters armed with military-grade rifles. Communist rebels pass through the same places they patrol. Poisonous snakes, charging tamaraw, animal traps, dangerously-swollen rivers ... every time our boys go out on patrol, one foot's already in the grave," adds June Pineda, former TCP head and now a Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer based in Mindoro.

To gather much-needed resources for TCP and various protected areas nationwide, BIOFIN is helping raise



TAMISAN Dos

GREGG YAN

the Philippine brown deer (*Rusa marianna*), Oliver's warty pig (*Sus oliveri*) plus many other rare and endangered species. It also hosts 490 of the world's 600 remaining tamaraw. It is also currently surrounded by 3,000 cattle belonging to 30 ranchers.

Rangers need help

Together, TCP and MIBNP rangers work to ward off invading cattle or heavily-armed poachers. They constantly dismantle spring-loaded balatik and deadly silo snare traps while discouraging the park's indigenous Taw'buid and Bahit tribesfolk from engaging in slash-and-burn farming.

"It's no easy task since the tribes must feed their growing families," says TCP head Neil Anthony del Mundo. "As their numbers swell, so do their requirements

funds via bank account donations to Metrobank account number 750-001-5620.

"A little help goes a long way. We ask fellow Pinoy's to donate just a bit to save the tamaraw and the rangers keeping them alive and kicking," says BIOFIN Philippines project manager Anabelle Plantilla. "Through their efforts and sacrifice, they have managed to grow tamaraw numbers from 100 to about 600."

Since its inception in 2012, BIOFIN has worked with both the public and private sectors to enhance protection for the country's biodiversity hotspots by helping secure funds to implement sound biodiversity programs.

The Igit-Baco Natural Park exists in a fragile balance. To keep its people, animals and ecosystems healthy, we all need to pitch in.



TAMARAW

GREGG YAN

Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of the United Nations Development Programme and Department of Environment and Natural



44 leatherback turtles released in Cavite

NOVELETA, Cavite: About 44 *pawikan* or leatherback turtle hatchlings were released Monday, January 13, at the Long Beach Resort in Barangay San Rafael 4 here in a bid to ensure the conservation of the endangered species.

According to Ed Chavez, Noveleta Municipal Environment and Natural Resources head, eggs of the leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) were buried in the sand at the resort where they eventually hatched and set out to sea.

The first batch of 73 sea turtles that hatched in November last year have already been released and another 97 eggs are expected to be hatched in a week from another female *pawikan*. The sea turtle can

lay up to 100 eggs, which incubate in warm sand for about 60 days.

The releasing of the hatchlings was led by Mayor Dino Reyes Chua and Cavite City Councilor Edmund Tirona, who is also the Cavite Wildlife Enforcement officer.

"This is proof that the shores of Long Beach are clean with the cooperation of the local government unit and Barangay San Rafael. We hope more sea turtles will hatch so that the town of Noveleta could be [declared] a marine sanctuary," Chua said in an interview.

Around 700 marine turtles hatchlings and 1,082 sea turtles hatchlings were released in the same area in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

DENNIS ABRINA



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PEZA promotes environment-friendly industrialization and transformation to green, sustainable, and disaster-free ecozones

PHILIPPINE Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) Director General Charito B. Plaza has guaranteed economic zones comply in its requirement to locate away from disaster-prone areas as she affirms that ecozones in CALABARZON did not acquire damages to its structures and to its operations from the recent Taal volcano eruption since Sunday.

"We assure that PEZA will be more precautionous in requiring ecozone development and masterplanning to avoid hazards and danger-prone areas. We must be strict in the enforcement of the geohazard laws and the environmental clearance certificate compliance by the ecozone developers, factories, utilities and facilities construction applicants," stated Plaza.

The comments come amid the threats of another eruption of Taal volcano since its recent eruption in January 12, which may affect more regions in the Philippines including NCR and Region IV-A.

Plaza cited the Lima Technology Center and the First Philippine Industrial Park, both located in Batangas, reported no damage, or major disruption to operations and

structures aside from the ashfall.

According to March 2019 data, PEZA has registered a total of 60 economic zones in Region IV, of which, 59 are privately developed and one, the Cavite Economic Zone, is government owned and developed. While PEZA manages ecozones nationwide, CALABARZON region has the most number of ecozones and locators in the country.

Specifically, as of January to September 2019, Region IV-A has a total of 1,962 locator companies, which employ a total of 523, 898 workers. This means that CALABARZON has 43.81% of the total locators of PEZA nationwide and 33.36% of the total employment generated by PEZA. CALABARZON also comprise 50.97% of the total exports generated by PEZA registered-companies and industries.

Meanwhile, the private ecozones in Region IV comprise a total of 3,921.1175 hectares composed of different types of ecozones. Manufacturing companies comprise 62.5%, IT Center comprise 19.64%, IT parks comprise 8.93%, Tourism comprise 3.57%, and Medical Tourism comprise 1.79%.

PEZA is focusing on preparation for the management of the consequences of natural or man-made calamities. In this view, PEZA is launching the program about the "Affiliation of PEZA Employees, Ecozones and Industries as Military Reservist Unit and the Disaster Resilience and Emergency Management (DREAM)". Under such program, PEZAns and industry workers are prepared to be disaster and emergenc responders who help ensure safety during natural or man-made disasters and who help secure lives and the ecozones.

In addition, Plaza said that "locators now have to craft their business continuity plans that should outline how they plan to do business in the face of the volcano's ongoing activity." Moreover, PEZA will also require and coordinate with locators to have their "Emergency Response Plans".

"PEZA will establish its own 'Incident Command System and Center' where ecozones, industries, workers and other stakeholders will get their information and direction in times of natural or man-made disasters and emergencies," she said.



P&G recycles 2.3M plastic sachets

PROCTER & Gamble (P&G) Philippines and World Vision Development Foundation Inc. have successfully implemented Pag-asa sa Basura, an environmental sustainability program that aims to collect and upcycle plastic sachets into school chairs, trash bins and other useful products.

Pag-asa sa Basura has partnered with 26 public schools in Malabon and Quezon City for the collection of used plastic sachets and plastic bottles in their respective communities. Within the first three months of the program alone, the schools were able to recover over 2.3 million plastic sachets and more than 700,000 hard plastic bottles. In return, students received incentives for every sachet and bottle collected.

The program, aside from enabling plastic recovery and recycling, aims to promote the importance of proper solid waste management. P&G and World Vision rehabilitated the schools' materials recovery facilities (MRFs), and trained teachers and students on proper waste segregation, upcycling and circular economy.

"As we continue to take pro-



Christmas lanterns made out of recycled waste materials were some of the products yielded by a contest and exhibit under the Pag-asa sa Basura program at Panghulo Main Elementary School in Malabon. (From left) : P&G Philippines corporate communications manager Charm Banzeulo, World Vision in the Philippines corporate engagement specialist AJ Renomeron, and representatives from Malabon and Quezon City elementary schools.

gressive action to mitigate plastic wastes, we aim to champion sustainable innovations through our brands and manufacturing and empower Filipino communities to be part of the solution through recycling, upcycling and other waste diversion initiatives. The Pag-asa sa Basura program is one of the ways we

collaborate with stakeholders and consumers for environmental sustainability," said Anna Legarda-Locsin, P&G communications head.

P&G and World Vision's program was able to orient over 3,000 students and teachers in Malabon and Quezon City on Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid

Waste Management Law. Alongside the workshop, Pag-asa sa Basura helped establish 21 Solid Waste Management Committees in Malabon and five committees in Quezon City, equipping students and faculty members to practice waste management more effectively inside their campuses and homes.



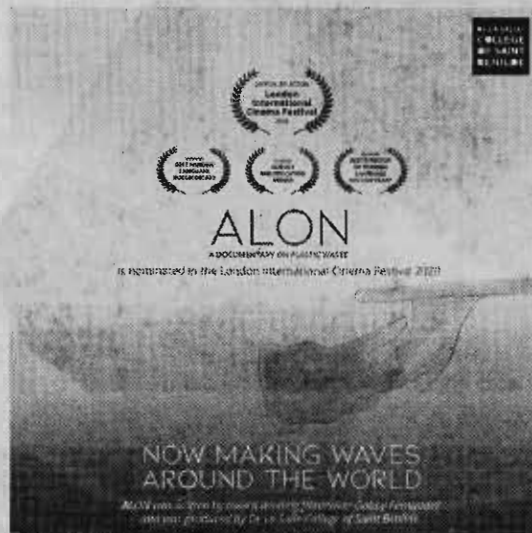
‘Alon!’ docu on plastic waste nominated in London film festival

With the aim to remind everyone of the immense impact of plastic pollution, it presents the wonders of the Philippines’ growing surf tourism and its relationship with the looming environmental problems

Alon!, an expertly-curated documentary on plastic waste written and directed by award-winning filmmaker Gabby Fernandez, has been nominated for the Best Foreign Language Documentary, Best Director of Foreign Language Documentary and Science and Education Award at the London International Cinema Festival to be held on 8 to 15 February in London, United Kingdom.

The annual week-long event celebrates the global independent film industry through a series of professional lectures, workshops and financing seminars. Showcased are premieres and screenings, and the highlight is the recognition of the year’s most promising independent and studio films from around the world. It likewise serves as an ideal platform for networking among the participating like-minded creatives and potential investors in a collaborative community setting.

It is in this venue that *Alon!*, produced by the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) through the Office of the Vice President for Advancement, will initiate a bigger ripple of change outside of the



“ALON!” has been nominated for three different categories at the London International Cinema Festival.

country. With the aim to remind everyone of the immense impact of plastic pollution, it presents the wonders of the Philippines’ growing surf tourism and its relationship with the looming environmental problems.

The film projects the issue through the lenses of the local surfers as eco-warriors who, in their own ways, are thriving to help save the environment. It showcases the breathtaking views of the six leading surfing communities namely Siargao, La Union, Baler, Mati in Davao,

Gubat in Sorsogon and Sabang Daguitan in Leyte, where resurfaced pieces of trash in form of packaged commodities hold proof of the extensive presence of plastic from Luzon to the Visayas and Mindanao.

“It is an interesting contrast: the beauty and simplicity of the surf lifestyle against the backdrop of runaway consumerism and ubiquity of plastic waste,” noted Fernandez, erstwhile chairman of the College’s Production Design Program. “This is an issue that this generation, the students themselves feel strongly about. It is their advocacy and, for a change, it is our generation following their lead. They take it seriously – as we all should,” he continued.

“What was presented was just an outcropping of a larger problem,” Fernandez revealed. “The surfers have answers to help solve the plastic pollution of the oceans. So, in turn, we used those insights and applied them to see where the root causes were coming from.”

The documentary posits how the production team’s quest for a solution led them back to the urban landscape where the unsurmountable production of single-use plastic and poor proper waste disposal remain to be predominant.

Fernandez wished we should take the issue seriously as soon as possible. “It is killing off many of our plant and animal life – including us – and choking our planet to death. Not just Filipinos, by the way, but everyone.”

Alon! was screened in various schools

including Jaime Hilario School-De La Salle Bataan, La Salle Green Hills, and De La Salle Lipa.

It started its pilgrimage to the featured surfing communities to honor the eco-warriors, with a premiere at the Lola Sayong Eco Surf Camp in Gubat, Sorsogon as part of Swellfest, an annual celebration of the start of the surf season wherein the locals immerse their guests in tours, workshops, and clean-up drives that aim to educate them on the risks of plastic.

It is an interesting contrast: the beauty and simplicity of the surf lifestyle against the backdrop of runaway consumerism and ubiquity of plastic waste.

Speaking on behalf of the local surfers of Gubat, Lola Sayong Eco Surf Camp head Noli John Mercader wished that tourists would learn how to be responsible travelers. He praised Benilde’s initiative which has helped them to spread the message. “*Malawak po ang network nila at kamalayan sa epektibong biswal na mag-educate sa tao ukol sa problema sa basura at sa plastic. Totoo na ang plastic ay clear at present danger sa atin at sa kalikasan* (Benilde has a wide network and visual understanding that would effectively educate the people regarding the problem on plastic waste. It is true that plastic is a clear and present danger to us and our environment).”



Holdout at ground zero

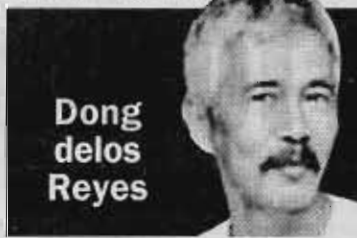
THE lone red coral tree at the north-eastern end of Manila Hotel barely waves its lanky arms at the noisy saraband of cars, vans, container vans and such flow of metal monsters any given day at Andres Bonifacio Drive in Manila's south port area.

Years back, there were other red coral trees lined up like a fenced in squad of sentries, sloughing foliage to squeeze out through myriad twig fingers a splendor of blood-dyed petals come April maybe around Lent. By 2005, that row of corals stood dead, bark stripped off their fat boles, trunks bleached pale—an infestation of African wasps had decimated every stand of red coral trees in Metro Manila and outlying areas.

Except for that tough one at Manila Hotel to which I ply a salutation nearly every evening or thereabouts as I trudge off from a watering hole on 20th Street in port area for a bite of beef mami and a few more beers at Peter Lee's Hong Kong Tea House on A. Mabini in Ermita alongside colleagues Dennis F and Rey "Ochoc" Muñoz.

That survivor of the plague of wasps—those nasty stingers drilled holes into red coral boles to lay eggs therein—stands a slingshot off the Kilometer Zero marker off the Jose Rizal monument in Bagumbayan. I call that area ground zero. And there's one tough holdout there

MANGKOKOLUM
Kulamnista.blogspot.com



Dong
delos
Reyes

that endures the swirl of dust and deadly fumes day by day.

'Twas a year ago when Manila Hotel honchos must have tasked their grounds maintenance crew to fell the dead dapdap trees. Red coral timbers and twigs were piled like a pyre before the lone survivor. A piece of plywood was tacked beside the mound. "FREE FIREWOOD" it read. Red coral wood isn't good firewood or material for cabinetwork. There maybe too little carbon content but more turgidity in the soft wood. Burns like ash. Must have poured out every whit of its passions in the blaze of flowering every Lent.

Dapdap-- that's the local name for red coral tree-- wood lends well to carving. Gaudy colored morion masks— of the Moriones festival held during Holy Week in Marinduque island-- are of dapdap and can fetch P3,000 to P5,000 apiece. The yearly pageant is a retelling of

the conversion to Christianity and martyrdom of a Roman centurion named Malchus. His ear was lopped off by an incensed Peter, tacked back sans sanctimonious restorative surgery done gratis et amore by Jesus Christ.

Poor Malchus—lost an ear, got the lobe back without getting an earful of the "Hello Garci" ring tone and when he lent more than an ear to the teachings of Christ, he was beheaded by his comrades in arms. Lost his head just like that. Unlike that poor centurion celebrated in the Moriones festival, there's also something called Morones festival in something called House of Representatives to crucify the citizenry.

Why would African wasps spare that lone coral tree at Manila Hotel? Or why didn't that sole survivor go the way of all flesh? What rendered this solamente arbol de sangre immune to the incessant wasp attack?

Something tells me it must have been the bird's nest fern cradled in the tree groin. It could be a happy partnership, a symbiosis that inheres benefits to the symbionts.

So night after night as I take a jaunt through ground zero, I offer thanks and a greeting to that not-so lonesome red coral tree and its fern partner for mustering metal mettle to endure, even burst into passionate flowering.



Kapitan, dawit sa illegal logging?

ALIAGA, Nueva Ecija - Nakalusot sa mga awtoridad ang isang barangay chairman na umano'y sangkot sa operasyon ng illegal logging sa kanilang lugar, matapos salakayin ang bahay nito sa Baranagy Bucot, ng nasabing bayan, nitong Miyerkules.

Ipinahayag ni Aliaga Municipal Police chief, Major Marlon Cudal, wala si Roman Gamboa III, alyas

'Bobot' nang isilbi ng mga tauhan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), militar at ng Aliaga Police ang search warrant sa bahay nito sa nabanggit na lugar.

Ayon sa pulisya, ang nasabing warrant ay ipinalabas ni Executive Judge Ana Marie Viterbo ng Cabanatuan City Regional Trial Branch 24.

Sa naturang operasyon, nasamsam ang iligal na kahoy na nasa 453 piraso at may volume na 12,215 board feet na at nagkakahalaga ng P448,600.

Nahaharap ang suspek sa kasong paglabag sa Presidential Decree 705 (Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines).

Light A. Nolasco



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Manila installs first of 3 air quality sensors

By Willie Casas

THE first of three air quality sensors has been deployed in the nation's capital, according to a recent report by the City of Manila's Public Information Office.

The air quality sensor was installed by the Manila City government's air quality management technical working group led by the Department of Public Services.

"This is part of the 'Air Blue Skies Program', a partnership program between Clean Air Asia, 3M Philippines and the Manila City government," the city government's statement read.

"It aims to deliver air quality solutions through the development of a science-based Clean Air Action Plan," it said.

The DPS was assisted by the Department of Engineering and Public Works and the Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office during the installation of the equipment.

The agencies were joined by representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Environmental Management Bureau, National Capital Region, Clean Air Asia, and 3M Philippines.

The gadget was installed by the city government after ash from Taal Volcano's initial eruption on Jan. 12 this year fell on the city.



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Calamba gov't workers, volunteers accept ashfall clean-up drive dare

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna — Close to 1,000 volunteers and government workers accepted the challenge of Mayor Justin Marc Chipeco for a massive clean-up drive dubbed "Oplan Linis.Bayanihan."

The mayor said 54 barangays in the city were affected by the ashfall brought by Taal Volcano's eruption on January 12.

Chipeco said the upland barangays near the boundaries of Tanauan City in Batangas and Tagaytay City in Cavite suffered heavy ashfall, which destroyed crops and livelihood of the residents.

Aside from ashfall, he said Taal evacuees in this city now reached 16,000. They are housed in eight evacuation centers.

Chipeco said the city government is facing two problems – how to support the evacuees and help them recover from the calamity.

Electricity was cut-off during the heavy ashfall that also affected the water supply in this city.

The local Bureau of Fire Protection, Calamba Water District and fire trucks from industrial companies supplied water to the residents and evacuees during the water interruption.

Gil Aman



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'Takbo sa Kalikasan', tulong sa pagsawata ng polusyon

MAGING malusog at tumulong sa paglilinis ng kapaligiran.

Ito ang 2-in-1 na layunin ng Green Media Event sa pagorganisa ng 4th 'Takbo sa Kalikasan' fun run – unang yugto ng isinusulong na Fire Run sa Mayo 31 sa CCP Complex sa Pasay City.

Ayon kay Jenny Lumba, Managing Director ng Green Media Event, isasagawa ang patakbo bilang pagsuporta din sa LGBTQ community na kabilang sa mga pangunahing tumatangkilig sa kanilang fund-raising activities tulad ng Pride Run at #lovewins advocacy.

"Patuloy po ang aming community outreach program tulad noong nakaraang taon kung saan ang Green Media events team at ilang volunteers namin ay namahagi ng groceries, medicines at feeding program sa mga piling charity institution, higit yaong nagsasagawa ng programa sa mga naapektuhan ng bulkan Taal ay sisikapin naming makapagpaabot din sa kanila ng tulong," pahayag ni Lumba sa kanyang pagbisita sa TOPS 'Usapang Sports' na itinataguyod ng Philippine Sports Commission, PAGCOR,

at Community Basketball Association.

Hinikayat naman ni Fritz Labastida, ang running ambassador at tinaguriang 'barefoot diva' ang publiko na makilahok sa 3k, 5k, 10k at 16k upang makatulong sa programa ng pamahalaan na mapanatili ang kaayusan at kalinisan ng kapaligiran. "Hindi kailangan mauna ka sa finish line, ang importante, makiisa ka sa paglilinis. Yung mga plastic bottles na madadaan mo sa ruta, puwede pulutin at ipunin. May mga katapat yang sopresang premyo," sambit ni Labastida.

Binubuo ang event series ng apat na elemento ng daigdig kung saan ang 2nd edition ay sa Hulyo 19 na Water Run, sa Set. 20 ang Air Run at ang 4th edition ay ang Earth Run sa Nob. 22.

"Nakatutuwa na mula sa 100 runners sa inaugural event namin, ngayon umaabot nakami ng mahigit sa 3,000. Masaya kami at pinatutunayan lamang nito na malakas na talaga ang awareness sa ating mga kababayan about climate change at sa tamang pangangalaga ng kalikasan," sambit ni Lumba.

Annie Abad



M Lhullier funds MRF. MLhullier (ML), one of the country's largest and most respected non-bank financial institutions, remains firm in its corporate social responsibility and environmental protection programs as it turns over a Material Recovery Facility in Brooke's Point, Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. The MRF will maximize the quantity of recyclables processed while producing materials that will generate the highest possible revenues in the market. This is one of the required facilities in every school that aims to teach students how to properly segregate garbage and waste. The ML team also distributed some giveaways that include ML Pack Bag, ML T-shirts, ML Eco bag and ML Ballpens to the students and teachers.



PH faces disasters 'others haven't seen'

NEWS



As CO₂ levels rise, PH faces perils 'others haven't seen'

Rising carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions could double the number of intense storms and floods in the next decade, according to a new study. While doubling the number of disasters in the Philippines would be an extreme case, the results would be "catastrophic," says Vinod Thomas. The country faces about nine extreme events yearly and one more extreme event like Supertyphoon "Yolanda" would strain its ability to cope, he says. —STORY BY JHESSET O. ENANO **A3**

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Rising carbon dioxide emissions globally could double the number of intense storms and floods in 13 years, which could severely damage the environment, hamper socioeconomic progress and threaten the lives of millions worldwide, according to a new paper published on Thursday.

Such scenario could be more devastating for the Philippines, which faces several extreme events in a single year and where many are exposed to hazards.

Researchers Ramon Lopez, Vinod Thomas and Pablo Troncoso published the study in *Climate, Disaster and Development Journal*, using climate data from 155 countries, spanning 46 years, from 1970 to 2016, for it.

Instead of climate models,

their research adopted a statistical and econometric approach in assessing the factors that contribute to the increase in frequency of intense floods and storms.

They analyzed the data by including vital socioeconomic factors, such as people's exposure to hazards and their vulnerabilities.

Their findings showed that in addition to these factors, the continuous rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration in the past four decades was significantly correlated with the increase in extreme disasters.

At least 100 deaths

Extreme disasters are defined as those causing 100 or more deaths and/or affecting 1,000 or more people.

The trend of more frequent storms and floods is also statistically and clearly established as a result of climate change,

the study showed.

"The results suggest that if the carbon dioxide level increases by 1 percent, floods and storms would increase by nearly 9 percent," Thomas, a visiting professor with the Asian Institute of Management, told the Inquirer.

The study showed that the yearly increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide has been 2.4 parts per million (ppm), or about 0.6 percent from the base 396.5 ppm from 2010 to 2016.

"Accordingly, the number of intense hydrometeorological disasters could increase by 5.4 percent annually for an 'average' country facing nearly one extreme disaster annually," Thomas said.

Much more serious for PH

For the Philippines, however, it is much more serious: "You are looking at more disasters that others haven't

seen," Thomas said.

Compared with the average of a single disaster in other countries, the Philippines faces about nine extreme events, as seen between 2010 and 2016, he said.

"One more extreme event in the Philippines, for example, one more Supertyphoon 'Yolanda' (international name: Haiyan) or Typhoon 'Pablo' (Bopha) or Tropical Storm 'Ondoy' (Ketsana), would strain the country's ability to cope," Thomas said.

While doubling the number of disasters in the Philippines would be an extreme case, the results would be "catastrophic," he said.

India, China, Australia

High risks are also seen in other countries, such as India, China, Bangladesh and Australia.

Thomas said the study complemented earlier reports re-

leased by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which used climate models to warn of catastrophic impacts in the near future if human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide are not curbed.

The authors said the global evidence presented in their paper, along with other similar studies, were calls to action for governments to step up their economic and environmental policies to curb growing damage from natural calamities.

"Rather than reacting to events as one-off and unpredictable occurrences, man-made events call for investments in prevention and mitigation programs," they said.

Risk reduction, mitigation

More investments in disaster risk reduction and mitigation are also needed from individual countries and the global

community, the study said.

For the Philippines, Thomas said the country would have to redouble its efforts in climate change adaptation.

More financial allocation for disaster management and disaster insurance, he said, would be among the crucial steps that the government would have to take.

"But all the adaptation in the world will not be enough if we do not mitigate," Thomas said. "The Philippines has to cut back on the use of coal and fossil fuels, and go all out for wind and solar power."

The country remains heavily dependent on coal for its energy needs, despite the passage of legislation on renewable energy sources in 2008.

Socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and exposure to hazards, should also be dealt with, Thomas said. **INQ**



Will 2020 World Economic Forum deliver on combating climate change?

BY ECO MATSER

AMSTERDAM: For the first time, the world's elites meeting this year at Davos have listed environmental issues as their top concerns about the next decade.

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual *Global Risks Report* raises the alarm on increased extreme weather events, man-made environmental damage — including oil spills and contamination, major biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and failure of governments and businesses to mitigate and adapt to climate change. All resulting in loss of human and animal life, and major damage to infrastructure, with irreversible consequences for the environment.

"The political landscape is polarized, sea levels are rising and climate fires are burning. This is the year when world leaders must work with all sectors of society to repair and reinvigorate our systems of cooperation, not just for short-term benefit but for tackling our deep-rooted risks," said Borge Brende, WEF president.

Does this mean that after Davos, 2020 businesses and governments are actually going tackle these realities seriously and with the necessary financial investments? Seeing is believing.

Fundamental change needed

If businesses and governments are serious about combating climate change, they must increase investments in climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as in the larger development agenda (Agenda 2030). But, this alone will not be enough.

If businesses do not start fundamentally changing current financial systems, we risk gaining only short-term benefits instead of addressing the real root causes.

The current world economy still relies on fossil fuels and energy-intensive production systems. And the fossil fuel industry continues to receive large subsidies from governments and investment banks. Although investment in renewable energy is on the rise, as long as fossil fuels are subsidized we

will not make a shift towards zero-carbon economies.

Many argue that not investing in fossil fuels hinders the development of low-income countries by denying them access to the same economic opportunities as high-income countries.

But, this just masks a lack of will on the part of the world's business elites who have the power and finances to pioneer a true transition. They are ignoring the fact that the economics of renewable energy have changed and there are many ways for low-income countries to leapfrog fossil fuels.

To succeed, the governments and companies at Davos should do two things: apply an integrated approach to mitigation, adaptation and development; and ensure an inclusive process and equal access to benefits of climate change measures.

An integrated approach

Mitigation, adaptation and development should not be three separate work streams. As shown in this article, effective climate action requires coherence between measures. Take investing in renewable energy. It directly reduces the emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. But when used to provide energy access to the most vulnerable, it also brings communities social and economic benefits that increase their resilience to climate change.

For example, access to energy provides services for small-scale farmers or community enterprises, like solar-powered agricultural irrigation systems, or food processing and storage. This in turn increases their general economic and climate resilience.

Another example is access to clean cooking solutions instead of burning wood. This not only reduces air pollution and deforestation, but also improves women and children's health and frees up time for studying or income-producing activities. This in turn strengthens their position in society.

Inclusive process and equal access

On the one hand, we must invest

vast resources to mitigate and adapt to global climate change; on the other, we need to tackle the deep injustices that lie at the heart of the climate crisis. The challenge is therefore to ensure a just transition in which *all* communities have *equal access* to the benefits of measures taken to tackle climate change.

Ironically, developing countries bear the brunt of the effects of climate change created by 150 years of unfettered industrial and agricultural development in the West. So we, in the West, have a moral obligation to help finance an inclusive climate transition and achieve the Sustainable Development Goal agenda.

A truly just transition

A truly just transition means including those who are generally left out of the decision-making processes: women, youth, and local or rural (indigenous) communities. So, give back power to local communities and offer opportunities for collaborative decision-making.

Access to information, public participation and direct involvement of local communities are key to foster transformative societal change. But failure to act on the climate crisis in an inclusive, participatory manner will certainly fuel even greater distrust of political elites and representative democracy.

So, as governments and businesses gather in Davos, we urge them to listen to the words of Borge Brende when he says world leaders must reinvigorate the system of cooperation and focus on long-term benefits.

Only when they start investing substantially in tackling root causes and transforming systems in an integrated and inclusive way, will putting climate change at the top of the WEF's agenda really mean something. Hivos will follow the conversations with interest and believe when we see.

IPS

Eco Matsers is global climate change/energy and development coordinator of the Netherlands-based Hivos development aid organization.



UK's Charles: Fight climate change

DAVOS: Britain's Prince Charles on Wednesday told business leaders at the Davos economic forum that wealth was of no use if it doesn't help tackle climate change, as he met Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg and warned over the perils of global warming and environmental damage.

Charles, the eldest son of the Queen and heir to the throne, met Thunberg in Davos on the same day as President Donald Trump left the Swiss resort expressing regret he had not seen the environmental campaigner.

Charles, a long-time advocate of environmental causes, launched at Davos a new Sustainable Markets Initiative aimed at encouraging the private sector to move towards green ways to promote growth.

"What good is all the extra wealth in the world gained from business as usual if you can do nothing with it, except watch it burn in catastrophic conditions?" asked Charles in a speech to the forum.

"This is why I need your help, your ingenuity and your practical skills to ensure that the private sector leads ourselves out of the approaching catastrophe into which we have engineered ourselves," he said.

"We simply cannot waste any more time. The only limit is our willingness to act and the time to act is now," he added.

Charles then held a private meeting with Thunberg, who the previous day told Davos "our house is still burning" and slammed governments for doing "basically nothing" on climate change.

Trump said on Wednesday he would "have loved" to have met Thunberg at Davos but added that she should not focus her anger on the United States.

He claimed that countries other than the United States were the worst polluters and "Greta ought to focus on those places."

Trump had launched an extraordinary attack on environmental campaigners in a speech to the World Economic Forum (WEF) on Tuesday, saying they were "perennial prophets of doom" and the "heirs of yesterday's foolish fortune tellers."

The president on Wednesday denied he thought that global warming was a hoax, saying: "No not at all — I think aspects of it are."

Charles, who prides himself on having warned of the perils of climate change before most political leaders, was asked by reporters in the corridors of Davos if he felt in any way targeted by Trump's "prophets of doom" comments.

"Ha! Good point!" he laughed. Charles made no reference in his speech to the turbulence in Britain's Royal Family that has seen an agreement for his younger son Harry to halt royal duties and leave for Canada with his wife Meghan. **AFP**



Lopez Group leads learning session on climate change for businesses

FIRST Gen Corp. (FGEN) and its pure renewable energy arm, Energy Development Corp. (EDC), spearheaded a workshop and seminar titled, "Climate Change and How to Address It Within Your Business" participated in by more than 50 representatives from 26 EDC partner companies and contestable energy customers.

A highlight of the event was a talk by one of the world's most prominent experts on the environment and sustainability issues, Matthias Gelber, also deemed the

"Greenest Person on the Planet" in a global online survey.

Gelber obtained a Master of Science degree in Environmental Science at Brunel University in the United Kingdom and co-founded Maleki GmbH, a German company specializing in high-performance, low-carbon footprint construction materials.

Gelber illustrated how it is very much possible for big scale companies to assess and reduce their own carbon footprints without compromising business

performance. The participants further engaged in a dialogue on how the private sector can help address climate change through simple but meaningful steps such as utilizing renewable energy and implementing other sustainability measures in everyday operations.

According to Oddy Velarde of Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines, the knowledge and best practices gained in the seminar will help them plan for future energy-related projects of the manufacturing

company. "It's good to know that we can contribute to CO2 reduction at zero cost," he said.

"The workshop gave us learnings to reinforce our sustainability road map, to place more focus on CO2 footprint and climate neutrality," said Knowles Philippines vice president and managing director Joseph Emmanuel Liwag.

EDC is the Philippines' largest vertically integrated geothermal developer, delivering 1,457.8 megawatts (MW) of clean and renewable energy to the country.

SA pangangalit ng Taal Volcano simula nitong January 12, 2020 hanggang sa kasalukuyan, maliban sa higit kalahating milyong mga kababayan natin sa sampung bayan ng Batangas, lubha ring naapektuhan ang mga hayop na nasa Volcano Island at maging ang mga alaga ng mga residente.

Tinatayang nasa tatlong libo ang mga kabayong nasa Volcano Island na siyang sinasakyan ng mga turista sa pagbaba sa crater ng bulkan. Ngunit nakalulungkot na 1% lamang ang nailigtas sa kaniila. Bagamat nakakaawa, naiintindihan naman natin na ang una talagang isinasalba sa panahon ng kalamidad ay ang mga tao saka na lamang binabalikan ang mga alagang hayop.

KAILANGAN NA ANG 'ANIMAL EVACUATION CENTER'

Bagamat gusto ring dalhin ng mga may-ari ang kani-kanilang alagang hayop, hindi naman ito pupuwedeng makipagsiksikan sa mga evacuation center, delikado rin na makapaminsala pa ito ng ibalalo na kung stress ang isang hayop.

Kaya wake-up call sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) partikular sa Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) nito na kailangang pag-aralan na ang pagkakaroon ng isang Animal Evacuation Center para sa mga hayop na maaapektuhan ng iba't ibang kalamidad lalo pa't inaasahan natin ito na magiging bahagi

ng Climate change.

Ibig sabihin, habang abala ang mga tauhan ng local disaster risk reduction and management office sa pag-sasagawa ng evacuation at search and rescue operation sa mga tao ang DENR-BMB ay dapat na mayroong tropa na tututok naman sa mga hayop para maisalba at madala sa isang rescue center. Sa mga sentrong ito pupuwedeng dalawin ng mga may-ari ang kani-kanilang alaga at kapag bumalik na sa normal ang lahat ay maaari na nilang mabawi at muling maalagaan.

Sa ngayon, maaari naman na gumawa muna ng department order ang DENR



DR. HILDA C. ONG

secretary para magkaroon ng temporary rescue shelter sa mga alagang hayop ng mga residenteng apektado ng Taal eruption. Maganda na magkaroon ito ng permanenteng mekanismo at budget kaya kakailanganin ang isang panukalang batas mula sa Kongreso.

-ooOoo-

JOEL M. GONZALES BAGONG DIRECTOR NG DOLE RO 5

Nanumpa sa tungkulin Si Joel M. Gonzales sa harap ni Labor Undersecretary for Regional Operations and Special Concerns Cluster Ana C. Di-

one (ika-2 mula sa kaliwa) bilang bagong hinirang na Direktor ng DOLE Regional Office 5, sa isang seremonya sa DOLE Central Office, Intramuros, Maynila noong Enero 20, 2020.

Ang nagsisilbing mga saksi ay sina Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, (ika-6 mula sa kanan) Labor Undersecretaries Joji V. Aragon at Claro A. Arellano, at Assistant Secretaries Federico V. Abuan, Jr., Alex V. Avila, Mariano R. Alquiza, at Dominique R. Tutay. (Larawan mula kay Dodong Echavez, IPS)





TUWING may mga kala-midad, kitang-kita ang malaking problema sa paglalagyan ng mga biktima na tinatamaan.

Halimbawa rito ang mga biktima ngayon ng sumasabog na Bulkang Taal.

Umabot sa 270,000 ang nasa mga evacuation center at libo-libo rin dito ang kinukupkop ng kanilang mga kamag-anak o kalbigan.

Nadagdagan pa ito dahil sa 14 kilometrong lockdown na pinairal na.

Karamihan sa mga evacuee ay nasa mga eskwelahan, gymnasium, simbahan at iba pa.

Pero hindi handa karaniban ang mga ito dahil hindi nga sila nadi-senyo bilang mga evacuation center.

MGA PROBLEMA

Kitang-kita ang mga problema sa mga evacuation center.

Nariryan ang nakati-wangwang at hindi maayos na higaan, siksi-kan, hindi sapat na palikuran at marami pang iba.

Kaya naman nagbubunga ito ng kawalan ng sapat na tulog, ng stress, ng sakit, ng mga away, at marami pang hindi magandang kala-gayan.

Ang mga eskwela, lalo na, nawawalan ng silbi.

Hindi makapag-aral ang mga bata, hindi makapagturo ang mga guro, nasisira ang programa sa edukasyon at nadadamay ang mga guro sa ibang mga trabaho na nagpapabigat sa mabigat na nilang trabaho bilang mga guro.

Marami rin ang pagkakataon na may mga krimen na nagaganap gaya ng mga nakawan at prostitusyon.

Hindi sasapat ang espasyong ito kung illista natin lahat ang mga hindi magandang bunga ng hindi maayos na mga evacuation center.

NAGTATAYO ANG MGA LGU

Parami nang parami ang mga local government unit na nagtatayo ng mga evacuation center.

Ngunit, multi-purPOSE ang mga ito gaya ng pagiging gymnasium na rin at ipunan ng mga tao para sa mga programang medical mission ng mga LGU, non-government organization, civic organizations at plyesta.

Ang iba, sa mga loob ng school campus pa rin bagama't hindi na-



NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

EVAC CENTERS ITAYO NA; CORONA VIRUS MABAGSIK

dadamay ang mga classroom kundi sa mga gymnasium o playing field ng mga ito.

MGA PROBLEMA SA PAGTATAYO

Gustuhin man ng mga LGU, gaya ng mga barangay, ang magtayo ng mga evacuation center kung may pagtatayuan sa kanila, nariryan naman ang problema sa pinansya.

Itong pinansya, mga Bro, ang pinakamalaking problema sa pagtatayo ng mga proyektong ito.

Milyon-milyong piso ang kailangan para sa maayos at kumpletong evacuation center.

Lalong mas malaki ang gagastusin kung isiping libo-libo ang kayang kanlungin ng center.

At dapat na kasama ang mga palikurang sapat at hindi gaanong nagsisiksikan ang mga biktima.

Dapat ding madaling puntahan, hindi binabaha, hindi mala-landslide at malayo sa mga danger zone na itinatagda ng mga ahensya ng pamahalaan.

MAGPATAYO - DIGONG

Ngayon nga ay gusto ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na magtayo na ang pamahalaan ng mga sapat at maayos na evacuation center.

Ito'y para maiwasan ang pagkadiskaril ng mga eskwela na lagi na lang ginagamit bilang mga evacuation center at iba pang lugar na mahahaling para sa ibang mga programa.

Kung matutuloy ito, at masasabayan ng mga housing project na ser-yosohan at sapat na pag-aruga sa mga biktima sa kasagsagan ng kalami-dad, tiyak ang pakikipagtulungan mismo ng mga mamamayan.

Marami ang labor force na magagamit at marami ang handang mag-sakripisyo kahit pairalin pa ang sistemang bayanihan.

WALANG KORAPSYON

Ang pinakabentahe ng pagtatayo ng mga evacuation center ngayong nagtatayo ang administrasyong Duterte ay ang mala-

king kabawasan sa korapsyon at pandarambong sa paggamit ng pondo para sa publiko na gagamitin sa pagtatayo ng evacuation center.

Kung dati-rati ay nasa 40 porsyento lang ang napupunta talaga sa mga proyekto, inasahang kakaunti lang ang tagas sa mga panahong ito.

Kaya, kung may matayong evacuation centers ngayon, tiyak na magaganda, matitibay, sapat ang mga pasilidad at marami pang iba.

Hindi na kasi masasalakay ng mga korap at mandarambong ang mga pondong pampubliko, kasama ang mga pribadong pondo na maihahalo rito.

May kalalagyan ang mga korap at mandarambong.

17 PATAY SA VIRUS

Kinakikitaan na ng bagsik ang novel corona virus N-COV.

Mabilis nang dumarami ang mga pinapatay ng nasabing virus na kamag-anak ng SARS na pumatay ng nasa 800 katao sa loob lang ng limang buwan noong 2002-2003.

Kaya dapat na pairalin nang husto ng ating mga awtoridad ang istriktong pagbabantay sa mga dayuhan at maging mga Pinoy na dumarating sa mga paliparan at pier, lalo na mula sa Tsina at Hong Kong.

Magtutulongan dapat ang lahat laban sa virus, partikular sa pamamagitan ng pagtutulungan na kilalanin ang mga may dala ng sakit.

Kung makalusot sa mga thermal scanner at check-up ang mga may sakit, sa oras na may palatandaan ng sakit na dala ng ating mga kasama, kabahay, katrabaho, kapitbahay at iba pa na ating makita o maraman, dapat na mag-ulat agad tayo sa mga kinauukulan para sila makakilos nang nararapat.

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