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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Manila Bay's coliform levels drop - DENR

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the major outfalls draining into Manila Bay have "drastically decreased" a year after the government started a rehabilitation drive, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported yesterday.

"There is reason to celebrate because a year after we launched the 'Battle for Manila Bay,' we have recorded improvements in the water quality from major drainage outfalls," said DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force.

Before the rehabilitation kicked off on Jan. 26 last year, the DENR recorded extremely high fecal coliform levels from major Manila Bay outfalls.

Cimatu said the most recent data from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) showed that the coliform levels have "drastically decreased."

Citing EMB data, Cimatu said the fecal coliform count at the Padre Faura outfall is down to 920,000 most probable number per 100 milliliters from its pre-rehabilitation record of 7.21 million mpn/100 ml.

The coliform level at the Rajah Soliman/Remedios drainage outfall across Aristocrat restaurant dropped to 11 million mpn/100 ml from 35 million mpn/100 ml.

At the Manila Yacht Club outfall, the coliform level was reported to be 54 million mpn/100 ml from a high of 110 million mpn.

Despite these improvements, Cimatu said more needs to be done to bring the level down to 100 mpn/100 ml to make the waters of the bay clean enough for swimming.

Last year, over 10,000 volunteers joined a cleanup activity along Roxas Boulevard in Manila and other areas in the bay region to kick off the

"Battle for Manila Bay" on Jan. 26, 2019 to fulfill an order issued by the Supreme Court in 2008.

President Duterte has allocated P42.95 billion for the implementation of the Manila Bay rehabilitation project within three years and at least 13 government agencies are working together to carry out the mission.

The DENR is set to inaugurate a sewage interceptor and treatment plant located in front of the Manila Yacht Club tomorrow. The facility, which is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day, will ensure that no untreated wastewater from the drainage outfalls flows into the bay.



Manila Bay's water quality improving a year after rehab

By ALEXANDRIA DENNISE SAN JUAN

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said water quality of major outfalls directly draining to Manila Bay significantly improved, a year after the previously polluted watershed started to be rehabilitated.

Citing latest data from the Department's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said coliform levels in the Manila Bay have "drastically decreased" compared to the extremely high fecal coliform amount recorded prior to the rehabilitation program which began January 26 last year.

According to Cimatu, the EMB findings showed a lower fecal coliform count at the Padre Faura outfall which is now at 920,000 most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100ml) from its pre-rehab record of 7.21 million mpn/100ml.

While at the Raja Soliman/Remedios drainage outfall across Aristocrat Restaurant, coliform level went down to 11 million mpn/100ml from the 35 million mpn/100ml recorded before the rehabilitation began.

The coliform level at the Manila Yacht Club outfall also plunged to 110 million mpn/100ml from a high 54 million mpn/100ml prior to the bay's rehab program.

"There is a reason to celebrate now because a year after we launched the 'Battle for Manila Bay,' we have recorded significant improvements in the water quality from major drainage outfall," Cimatu, who also chairs the Manila Bay Task Force, said.

Despite these improvements, however, Cimatu pointed out that more needs to be done to further improve Manila Bay's water quality as its standard fecal coliform level is 100 mpn/100ml based on its classification as "Class SB" coastal and marine water.

President Duterte has allocated ₱42.95 billion for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project for three years to be implemented by at least 13 government agencies.

The government targets the source of water pollution in an effort to rehabilitate, restore and maintain the historic bay to a level fit for swimming, as mandated in the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court in 2008.

To mark the Battle for Manila Bay's first year on Sunday, the DENR has lined up several activities such as the inauguration of the sewage interceptor and treatment plant located in front of the Manila Yacht Club.

The DENR said that this facility is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day to ensure that no untreated wastewater from the drainage outfalls flows into the bay.

A cleanup activity will also take place at the Baseco Beach, followed by the signing of the Pledge of Support from the private sector to the DENR's War on Waste to be led by members of the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS).

The DENR will also launch the Solid Waste Management Advocacy Program which aims to increase public awareness on waste segregation, reducing garbage and raising cash from trash.



Manila Bay water quality improving

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported significant improvements in the water quality of major outfalls directly draining into Manila Bay a year after the pollution-challenged water body started undergoing rehabilitation.

"There is reason to celebrate because a year after we launched the 'Battle for Manila Bay,' we have recorded significant improvements in the water quality from major drainage outfalls," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force, declared.

This, as Supreme Court Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta urged the 13 government agencies tasked with the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay to "take a coordinated stance" amid the extreme necessity for all concerned executive departments and agencies to immediately take action.

Speaking at the "Battle for Manila Bay: Second Manila Bay Task Force Principals' Meeting and Conference" held on 23 January at The Manila Diamond Hotel, Peralta mentioned the case of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority vs Concerned Residents of Manila Bay, wherein the Court introduced into jurisprudence the legal concept of "continuing *mandamus*," which has become "the cornerstone of most environmental cases in the Philippines."

"Continuing *mandamus*" is a writ issued by a court in an environmental case directing any

agency or instrumentality of the government or officer thereof to perform an act or series of acts decreed by final judgment which shall remain effective until judgment is fully satisfied.

Before the Manila Bay rehabilitation kicked off on 26 January last year, the DENR recorded extremely high fecal coliform levels from major Manila Bay outfalls.

But now, Cimatu said the most recent data from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) showed that the coliform levels have been "drastically decreased."

Citing EMB data, Cimatu said the fecal coliform count at the Padre Faura outfall is now down to 920,000 most probable number per 100 milliliter (mpn/100ml) from its pre-rehab record of 7.21 million mpn/100ml.

We have recorded significant improvements in the water quality from major drainage outfalls.

From 35 million mpn/100ml recorded before the rehabilitation began, Cimatu said the coliform level at the Raja Soliman/Remedios drainage outfall across Aristocrat Restaurant went down to 11 million mpn/100ml.

Despite these improvements, however, Cimatu said more need to be done especially since the standard fecal coliform level in Manila Bay is 100 mpn/100ml based on its classification as "Class

SB" coastal and marine water.

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

Bacoor Mayor Lani Mercado-Revilla noted the failure of previous efforts to clean up the Manila Bay despite around P50 billion being spent for past projects.

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

Mr. Duterte's order for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, as well as the National Economic Development Authority's "Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan," identified major actions necessary for the success of the Manila Bay cleanup drive.

Last year, over 10,000 volunteers joined a massive cleanup activity along Roxas Boulevard in Manila and other areas in the bay region as a kickoff to the rehabilitation project dubbed as "Battle for Manila Bay," which enjoys the full backing of the Duterte administration.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has allocated P42.95 billion for the implementation of the Manila Bay rehabilitation project within three years, and at least 13 government agencies are working together to carry out the mission.



Manila Bay rehab challenge issued

Peralta issued the reminder to the 13 government agencies involved in the rehabilitation

By Alvin Murcia
@tribunephil_alvi

Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta urged government agencies tasked with the rehabilitation of Manila Bay to "take a coordinated stance" amid the pressure to immediately take action.

Peralta issued the reminder to the 13 government agencies involved in the rehabilitation in the wake of the challenge "to immediately act and discharge their respective official duties and obligations."

In his keynote speech during the "Battle for Manila Bay: 2nd Manila Bay Task Force Principals' Meeting and Conference" Thursday at the Diamond Hotel, Peralta cited the case of the MMDA vs. Concerned Residents of Manila Bay, which led to the formation of the Task Force.

Peralta said it "still remains relevant as it has been credited with bringing forth a lot of changes and reforms, not just in the way that we hear and decide environmental cases, but perhaps more importantly, in emphasizing its urgency and importance on global and inter-generational impact." The case was promulgated in December 2008.

The Chief Justice added that MMDA vs. Concerned Residents of Manila Bay, wherein the Court introduced into jurisprudence the legal concept of "continuing *mandamus*", has grown to be "the cornerstone of most environmental cases in the Philippines."

"Continuing *mandamus*" is a writ issued by a court in an environmental case directing any agency or instrumentality of the government or officer thereof to perform an act or series of acts decreed by final judgment which shall remain effective until judgment is fully satisfied.



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Quality of water draining into Manila Bay improves

THE water quality of major outfalls directly draining into Manila Bay has significantly improved a year after the pollution-challenged water body started undergoing rehabilitation.

This was reported yesterday by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu as he believed there is a reason to celebrate a year after the launching of the 'Battle for Manila Bay.'

"We have recorded significant improvements in the water quality from major drainage outfalls," said Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force.

Before the rehabilitation kicked off on Jan. 26 last year, the DENR recorded extremely high fecal coliform levels from major Manila Bay outfalls.

But now, Cimatu said the most recent data from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) showed that the coliform levels have "drastically decreased."

Citing EMB data, Cimatu said the fecal coliform count at the Padre Faura outfall is now down to 920,000 most probable number per 100 milliliter (mpn/100ml) from its pre-rehab record of 7.21 million mpn/100ml.

From 35 million mpn/100ml recorded before the rehabilitation began, Cimatu said the coliform level at the Raja Soliman/Remedios drainage outfall across Aristocrat Restaurant went down to 11 million mpn/100ml.

The coliform level at the Manila Yacht Club, on the other hand, said Cimatu, the outfall is now 110 million mpn/100ml from a high of 54 million mpn/



100ml

However despite these improvements, Cimatu stressed there are more needs to be done especially since the standard fecal coliform level in Manila Bay is 100 mpn/100ml based on its classification as "Class SB" coastal and marine water.

Last year, over 10,000 volunteers joined a massive cleanup activity along Roxas Boulevard in Manila and other areas in the bay region as a kick-off to the rehabilitation project dubbed as "Battle for Manila Bay," which enjoys the full backing of the Duterte administration.

Duterte has allocated P42.95 billion for the implementation of the Manila Bay rehabilitation project within three years and at least 13 government agencies are working together to carry out the mission.

The government targets the source of water pollution in an effort to rehabilitate, restore and maintain the historic bay to a level fit for swimming, as mandated in the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court in 2008.

To mark Battle for Manila Bay's first year tomorrow, Jan. 26, the DENR has lined up several activities including the inauguration of the sewage interceptor and treatment plant located in front of the Manila Yacht Club.

The facility, which is

capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day, will ensure that no untreated wastewater from the drainage outfalls flows into the bay.

The main event will be held at the Baseco Beach. A cleanup activity will begin at 6 a.m., followed by the signing of the pledge of support from the private sector to the DENR's War on Waste to be led by members of the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS).

PARMS commits to initiate and support efforts to manage plastic and other waste materials and reduce the country's waste footprint.

The DENR will also launch the Solid Waste Management Advocacy Program aimed at increasing awareness on waste segregation, reducing garbage and raising cash from trash.

The invited guests include Supreme Court Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta, Senator Cynthia Villar, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año, Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Fuyat and Manila Mayor Isko Moreno.

Around 20,000 stakeholders and volunteers are expected to join the various activities lined up during Battle for Manila Bay's first anniversary.

Cory Martinez



DENR:

Waste segregation yields 30% savings

BY TYRONE C. PIAD

A household could save up to 30 percent if it would practice proper segregation of garbage regularly, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official said.

Benny Antiporda, Environment undersecretary for solid waste management and local government units, said in a media briefing in Quezon City this week that households should begin changing their attitude toward garbage disposal right away to help the environment and pocket some savings.

"[Can] you imagine, *kung nakahiwalay 'yung recyclables doon sa residuals at biodegradables, 30 percent na ang matipid natin* (if we separate recyclables, residuals and biodegradables, we could save up to 30 percent)," he said.

Antiporda said proper disposal at home refers to "segregation at

source," citing Republic Act 90043 or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000."

"Segregation at source shall refer to a solid waste management practice of separating, at the point of origin, different materials found in solid waste in order to promote recycling and re-use of resources and to reduce the volume of waste for collection and disposal," the law stated.

The DENR official said the main concern in waste management was still residuals, or those packaging and plastics that are "literally single-use" because they must be discarded right away after use. They could not be recycled or repurpose



■ Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda
PHOTO BY JOHN ORVEN VERDOTE

anymore, he added.

"It ends up in the landfill. It ends up in the water waste. It ends up in the dumping area," Antiporda said.

Citing an example, he said that thin film plastic bags — or so-called *sando* bags — used in wet markets were usually thrown out immediately after customers brought home their goods bought.

Another would be retail goods

packaged in sachets, he added.

Antiporda also explained that paper cups, while made with sustainable materials, also have single-use plastic or wax embellished on their insides.

"Basically, if we can only learn how to use it and dispose it. I don't think we will have a problem. And I don't think that it will end up in water waste," he said.



Villar renews call for ban on single-use plastic

By **PAOLO ROMERO**

Government agencies and local officials should work harder to ban single-use plastic, which is one of the main causes of the degradation of Manila Bay, Sen. Cynthia Villar said yesterday.

Villar, chairperson of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources, pressed anew for the ban on single-use plastic in a gathering of the heads of agencies tasked to clean and rehabilitate Manila Bay.

"Plastics is one of the worst cause of destruction and pollution of our environment, and death of our marine resources. We know because in our clean-ups, almost all the garbage we collect are plastic wastes," the senator said during the Second Principals' Meeting and Conference of the Manila

Bay Task Force held at the Diamond Hotel in Manila.

She said despite the move of some cities to ban plastics in their localities, the enormity of the problem calls for a nationwide ban, which is also favored by President Duterte.

She said her committee will soon start public hearings on Senate Bill 333 or the proposed Single-Use Plastic Product Regulation Act, which she filed to regulate the manufacturing, importation and single use of plastic products.

Also under the bill, the issuance of single-use plastics by food establishments, stores, markets and retailers will be prohibited.

Consumers will also be diverted to use reusable materials and manufacturers will be mandated to collect, recycle and dispose of single-use plastics manufactured and/or

in circulation in the general market. Importation of single-use plastics will no longer be allowed.

"We also seek to amend the 20-year-old Solid Waste Management Act to include the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility which will require the manufacturers using plastic materials in their packaging to be responsible in recovering the plastic wastes," Villar said.

The meeting was held ahead of the celebration of the first anniversary of the Battle for Manila Bay on Jan. 26. The achievement of the task force was highlighted during the meeting, including the drop in fecal coliform levels in some areas of Manila Bay from billions to hundreds of thousands, and the successful relocation of informal settlers.

Environment Secretary and Manila Bay Task Force chairman Roy Cimatu thanked members of the task force and the people who conduct daily clean-ups in the bay.

"What we started here is the beginning of something transformative for the Philippines – a true revolution. Let the battle for Manila Bay rage on!" Cimatu said.

The Manila Bay Task Force was created by Administrative Order 16 signed by President Duterte on Feb. 19, 2019.

The basis of the AO is the writ of continuing mandamus issued by the Supreme Court in December 2008 directing 13 agencies and private entities to clean up, rehabilitate, preserve, restore and maintain the waters of Manila Bay to a level that is fit for swimming, skin diving and other forms of recreation.



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Sen. Villar pushes ban on single-use plastics

STRESSING that plastics have been the leading cause of environmental destruction, Senator Cynthia Villar said the Senate will conduct a hearing on the proposed ban on the issuance of the single-use plastics by food establishments, stores, markets, and retailers.

Villar, chairperson of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources, said that despite some cities banning plastics in their localities, the problem on plastic remains big.

She added that the enormity of the problem calls for a nationwide ban, which is also favored by President Rodrigo Duterte.

The senator is the author of Senate Bill 333 or the Single-Use Plastic Product Regulation Act, which seeks to regulate the manufacturing, importation, and single-use of plastic products.

Under Villar's proposed measure, the issuance of single-use plastics by food establishments, stores, markets, and retailers will be prohibited.

Macon Ramos-Araneta



PH-wide plastic ban pushed

POINTING at plastic waste as the most alarming environmental issue Senator Cynthia Villar raised anew the proposal to ban single-use plastic in a gathering of the heads of agencies tasked to clean and rehabilitate Manila Bay during the 2nd Principals' Meeting and Conference of the Manila Bay Task Force held at the Diamond Hotel in Manila.

Villar said: "Ang plastic ang isa sa pinakamalubhang nakakapinsala sa ating kapaligiran at pumapatay sa mga yamang dagat. Alam natin lahat iyan dahil sa lahat ng mga cleanups, puro plastic wastes ang nako-collect natin."

Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, noted that despite the move of some cities to ban plastics in their localities, the enormity of the problem calls for a nationwide ban, which is also favored by President Rodrigo Duterte.

The lady senator also said she will start the public hearing on the bill she authored, Senate Bill 333 or the Single-Use Plastic Product Regulation Act, which seeks to regulate the manufacturing, importation, and single-use of plastic products.

Marlon Purificacion



Villar iginiit sa Manila Bay Task Force na kailangang ipagbawal ang single-use plastic

MULING inihayag ni Senador Cynthia Villar ang panukalang ipagbawal ang "single-use plastic" sa pagpupulong ng mga pinuno ng mga ahensiyang naatasang maglinis at magrehabilitate sa Manila Bay.

Sa 2nd Principals Meeting at Conference ng Manila Bay Task Force na idinaos sa Diamond Hotel, Manila, binigyan din ni Villar na ang plastic waste ang pinaka-naka-kaalarmang environmental issue.

Iginiit din ni Villar, chairperson ng Senate

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, na sa kabila ng pagbabawal ng mga siyudad sa paggamit ng plastic, napakalaki pa rin ng ating problema sa plastic.

Bunsod nito, naniniwala ang senador na kailangan ang nationwide ban sa plastic na suportado naman ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Sinabi rin ng senador na magsasagawa siya ng public hearing sa Senate Bill 333 o ang Single-Use Plastic Product Regulation Act na kanyang inakda. Layu-

nin nito na i-regulate ang manufacturing, importasyon at single-use ng plastic products.

Sa ilalim din ng panukala, ipagbabawal ang single-use plastics sa food establishments, mga tindahan, merkado at retailers.

Pinaaalalahanan din ang consumers na gumamit ng reusable materials at ang manufacturers na kolektahin, mag-recycle at itapon ang single-use plastics na nasa merkado. Hindi na rin papayagan ang importasyon ng single-use plastics. (Mylene Alfonso)



FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

5.9%

The good news is that our economic growth surged 6.4% in the fourth quarter of 2019. But the final growth number for the third quarter was adjusted downwards to only 6%.

The bad news is that the 2019 economic growth number is only 5.9%, barely missing the lower end of the official target range. This is the first time in 8 years the economy failed to expand by 6% or better.

Economic planning secretary Ernesto Pernia attributes the lower growth achievement to the delay in the enactment of the 2019 budget. His "guesstimate" is that we lost a full percentage point (or more) because public spending was largely frozen in through the first half of 2019.

That full percentage point might have pulled us up to match Vietnam's 7% growth for the year. That dynamic nation leads East and Southeast Asian growth, with China climbing down to a 6% expansion rate – largely as a result of the effects of the trade war with the US.

Vietnam is not about to slow down and wait for us to recover from the frailties of our own politics. It is putting in all the right policies to charge up its rapid expansion – especially in building state of the art infra to support economic activity. At the moment, Vietnamese per capita consumption of steel is twice ours. That says a lot.

Twenty-five years ago, I accompanied then President Fidel Ramos on a state visit to Vietnam. Standing by the roadside in Hanoi, he popped a surprising and prescient question: "Alex, when will Vietnam overtake us?"

Taken by surprise, I paused for a few moments while observing Vietnamese farmers bicycle into town with sacks of cash. On the same bikes, they would strap Sony TV sets and pedal back to their villages.

"I don't think they ever will, Mr. President," I muttered, "they don't have a banking system." At that time, we had universal banks while the Vietnamese were hiring our corporate lawyers to write out contracts for them.

I was never so wrong. Vietnam rapidly gained ground on us. Today they are growing a large agricultural surplus and keeping a lion's share of direct investments flows into the region.

Our agriculture, burdened with obsolete orthodoxies and backward farm systems, continues to hold our economic growth hostage. Until rice tariffication forces a revolution in our agriculture, farm inefficiency will be a leash on our growth.

We fully intend to outgrow Vietnam this year. Our economic managers project growth that could exceed 7%, helped by the timely passage of the national expenditure plan and a special law that allows use this year of the unspent project funds last year.

Hopefully, natural calamities will not dent that projection.



In-city

If we intend to gain headway in the massive effort to clean up Manila Bay, the coastal municipalities need to be effective in their assigned tasks.

The City of Bacoor has proven to among the most assiduous local governments in the cleanup effort. Recently, DILG presented Bacoor with the Gold Award for its achievements towards cleaning up the bay.

The most challenging component of the cleanup effort is the relocation and resettlement of informal settlers along the coastline. The informal settler communities not only dump waste directly into the Bay. The settlements also clog up waterways, causing flooding in the urban areas.

Managing the urban poor communities requires permanent resettlement programs. There are no quick fixes here. Resettlement programs must be sustainable. To be so, they should provide housing options within the city, close to sources of livelihood of the poor, and yet properly engineered to prevent pollution of the bay.

Consistent with the DENR's Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy and pursuant to President Duterte's Administrative Order No. 16, the city sought the help of urban planners and engineers to develop plans for the 420-hectare Bacoor Reclamation Project.

This reclamation project will simultaneously address several problems confronting this congested city whose population is expected to double in a few years. It will enable construction of proper drainage channels to solve the city's flooding problems. It will allow the installation of treatment facilities to ensure only clean water is expelled to the bay.

The reclamation project will create space for new roads to complement the Cavitex system and supplement the old congested roadways. It will provide space for the construction of medium rise housing to accommodate the informal settler communities. These housing projects will allow in-city resettlement.

Furthermore, the reclamation project will allow for the development of green areas for residents of the crowded city. It will help create a fully managed coastline that will open the way for the revival of the traditional aquaculture of city residents.

All previous efforts to clean the bay's waters failed because they did not provide a comprehensive solution that enables both in-city resettlement as well as full coastal management. An estimated P50 billion has been spent on cleaning up Manila Bay with little results to speak of.

This is what sets the Bacoor Reclamation Project apart from the efforts to other LGUs around the bay. It is a comprehensive solution to simultaneously address in city resettlement issues, water treatment, road congestion and coastal management in one package. It takes inspiration from the best reclamation projects abroad.

Most important, the ambitious project is fully supported by the citizens of Bacoor. All the barangay councils have signed on to a manifesto of support for the project spearheaded by Mayor Lani Mercado.

The comprehensive plan drawn up by Bacoor could be a model for other coastal communities.



Smart, sustainable areas soon to rise

The city government of Bacoor is pursuing two reclamation projects which not only aims to transform the city into a new center of growth, but also to decongest Metro Manila and to help in the long-term clean-up of Manila Bay.

The two projects are the Bacoor Reclamation and Development Project (BRDP) covering 320 hectares and the Diamond Reclamation and Development Project consisting of 100 hectares.

HIDDEN AGENDA



MARY ANN
LL. REYES

According to Bacoor City Mayor Lani Mercado-Revilla, the reclamation projects include a component that would not only help in the long-term clean-up of Manila via the relocation and resettlement of informal settler families living along the 10 coastal barangays, but would also address flooding in the city.

Mercado said the proposed projects would be integrated with various long-term flood mitigating projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

During a recent public hearing conducted as part of the environmental impact assessment system, the mayor explained that the reclamation projects which are designed with deep channels and waterways for the efficient flow of water into the sea complement the anti-flood measures being implemented by the national government. Bacoor, being the catch basin of the Cavite province, is naturally prone to flooding. The proposed channels would serve as outlets of the government flood-control infrastructures aided with the most advanced technology with the least inconvenience to the public.

It was emphasized that elevated and equipped with wave deflectors at the banks, the reclamation would also serve as an integral part of the city's coastal defense that would shield it and adjacent areas from storm surges. Mercado said that studies conducted by the private sector partners of the city have shown that the reclamation islands would serve as anti-storm surge walls of the city.

The reclamation projects call for the creation of two resettlement sites for informal settlers and fishermen living along coastal areas who would be affected by the proposed projects. One of these sites is Ciudad Kaunlaran located in Molino II where medium-rise buildings will be constructed with basic facilities, a government center with social services, and livelihood support programs. Meanwhile, properties in Barangay Alima will be transformed into a fisherman's village for the resettlement of fishermen along the coastlines of Bacoor Bay. A wharf with berthing facility will be constructed for the use of the fishermen who will still be allowed to fish in the new site.

If things go as planned, the reclamation projects will attract new investments and businesses in the mixed-use zone for residential, leisure, commercial and education and technology hubs. Revilla said that with the establishment of business hotels in the reclamation area, Bacoor is projected to earn an additional P1.8 billion in revenues from tourism activities alone.

The proposed reclamation projects have received support from various sectors. In a resolution, the Bacoor City Liga ng mga Barangay expressed support for the proposed reclamation projects.

The resolution noted that Bacoor City has limited land for its rapidly growing population and for the expansion of commercial development and this limitation is detrimental to its economic growth. New lands, it said, are necessary to create more job and business opportunities for the locals.

Barangay leaders said the Bacoor city government and its private partner in the proposed reclamation project have a concrete plan for informal settlers which may be affected, such as decent housing as relocation site within the city and priority for employment in all jobs which will be created by the project.

The Sangguniang Kabataan City Federation of Bacoor has written Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, saying the reclamation will create jobs, career and business opportunities for the whole province of Cavite without compromising the culture and quality of fishing and the environment as a whole. It is estimated that at least 700,000 new jobs will be generated.

Once a coastal municipality with an established agri-fishery industry, Bacoor is now a city which has lost most of its agri-fishery base due to rapid growth and urbanization. Almost 73 percent of Bacoor's land area of 4,511 hectares is now devoted to residential use. Agricultural lands and fishponds now cover only 410 hectares or 6.6 percent of the city's total land area.

With the population of Metro Manila expected to surpass 20 million by 2025, nearby areas including Bacoor are anticipated to feel the pressure. With available land becoming more and more scarce, reclamation seems to be the only solution.

Proponents assure the reclamation projects will not adversely affect adjacent protected areas such as the Las Pinas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area and mangrove sites near the mouth of Imus River since the projects will be constructed at least 500 meters away from the LPPCHEA.

They likewise said the projects will promote inclusive sustainable growth, ensuring, among other things, that Bacoor's famous mussel, oyster, and fisheries industry will continue to thrive with adequate mitigation measures and the city government's aquaculture modernization program.

Also promising is the move to make the transport system within the reclamation areas very efficient. The reclaimed areas will not only have external linkages to the proposed extension of LRT-1, Cavite, and other existing roads, but will also incorporate a comprehensive network of pedestrian-oriented pathways and facilities with provision for bicycles and other non-motorized forms of transportation.

The reclamation projects also promise world-class development since they will be engineered and designed by leading firms including Denmark's Ramboll, UDP International, and Philippine-based AMH and will be based on the concept of a smart city framework which has three core values, namely, people, place and planet, enhanced by technology.

For comments, e-mail at mareyes@philstarmedia.com



Bacoor City wins DILG gold award

MANILA Bay's clean-up campaign has found a strong ally in the city of Bacoor.

For that Bacoor has received a gold award from the Department of the Interior and Local Government in recognition of its significant accomplishments in compliance with President Rodrigo Duterte's directive for the clean-up of Manila Bay.

Mayor Lani M. Revilla received the award for Bacoor's performance under the 2019 Manila Bay Clean Up Rehabilitation and Preservation Program LGU Compliance Assessment from the representatives of the DILG and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The DILG is monitoring LGU compliance with environmental laws for the clean-up of Manila Bay pursuant to

Administrative Order No. 16 President Rodrigo Duterte issued last year. The order created a task force in compliance to the 2008 mandamus of the Supreme Court directing various government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay.

The SC ordered the DENR to fully implement its Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy, which includes

the reduction of illegal settlers, establishments and structures along coast lines and prevent future occupation of these shorelines.

The Bacoor City Government expects to further boost its compliance with President Duterte's Manila Bay clean up directive through the proposed 420-hectares Bacoor Reclamation Project, particularly through its program for relocation and resettlement of informal settler families living along 10 coastal barangays of the city.

During the public hearing held last Jan. 9, where the proposed projects earned overwhelming support of the city's residents, Mayor Lani M. Revilla noted the failure of previous efforts to clean up Manila Bay despite spending around P50 billion.

"Ang nakikita natin, reclamation ang pinakamagandang long-term solution lalo na sa may Cavitex area," she added. Revilla pointed out that the city is readying two resettlement sites for the ISFs and fishermen living along coastal areas who would be impacted by the reclamation projects.

"Masasabi natin na ito ay isa sa mga iilang reclamation projects sa Pilipinas na may in-city relocation," Revilla had assured the Bacooreños.

President 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.



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NOT CAUSED BY TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION

METRO MANILA BLANKETED IN HAZE DUE TO 'COLLIDING' WINDS

By Patricia Denise M. Chiu
@PDMChiuINQ

The air in Metro Manila on Friday was noticeably hazier than usual, but experts said it had nothing to do with the currently restive Taal Volcano, which started to spew ash again on the same day.

Instead, the haze which enveloped Metro Manila was due to easterly winds meeting with air from the sea, Gerry Bagtasa of the University of the Philippines' Institute of Environmental Sci-

ence and Meteorology said.

The "collision" of the two winds from opposite directions left the pollution in the metro stagnant, causing the haze.

The easterlies or trade winds are permanent east-to-west prevailing winds that usually flow in the Earth's equatorial region. Bagtasa explained that while winds in the metro are usually northeasterlies, current high pressure in the region of Japan has pushed air lower.

"The wind from the east is meeting the sea breeze, which

is causing the air in the metro, and the pollution with it, to remain stagnant," Bagtasa said, adding that coupled with light rains, and it gives the appearance of fog or haze.

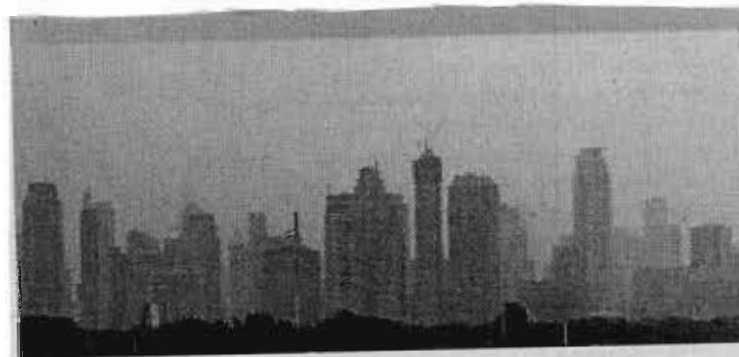
He further explained that while the source of pollution such as vehicle exhaust is always present in the metro, it is usually blown away day-to-day.

Bagtasa recommended that the public avoid any strenuous physical activities outdoors, since the accumulated stagnant pollution in the atmosphere

can be harmful. He also said wearing masks could help filter out pollutants in the air.

According to air quality monitoring site Airtoday, "poor" air quality was recorded on Friday afternoon. The level of air pollutants reached 63 to 65 micrograms per cubic meter at 1 p.m., significantly higher than the World Health Organization's standard for exposure to air pollution, which is a maximum of 25 micrograms per cubic meter.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and



BLURRY SKIES A haze is seen over Makati City at 5:30 p.m. on Friday. —LYN RILLON

Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the haze was unrelated to Taal Volcano's eruption.

Pagasa weather specialist Sheila Reyes said in a phone in-

terview that the ash from Taal Volcano moved west of Taal, and that the weather monitoring service had not seen any indication that there was ashfall in Metro Manila. INQ



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'Pollution' haze blankets Metro Manila

By HELEN FLORES

It wasn't ash spewed by Taal Volcano but plain old pollution that blanketed Metro Manila with a thick haze yesterday, according to the state weather bureau.

Ana Clauren, weather specialist at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), explained that clouds and high humidity "trapped" air pollutants, such as smoke from vehicles.

High moisture levels have the tendency to hold pollutants, she explained.

"It's (haze). It is not related to Taal Volcano's steam emission earlier," Clauren told *The STAR*.

"It's pollution and it's not good for health," she said. "Because it's Friday many people used their cars."

On Jan. 12, Taal Volcano's eruption sent ash more than 100 kilometers north, reaching Metro Manila and as far as Central Luzon.

Clauren said the pollution to be brought by Chinese New Year celebrations last night was expected to worsen air quality in the metro.

Meanwhile, the weather forecaster said should Taal emit more ash, it is likely to

be carried toward Cavite and Batangas because of the prevailing easterly winds.

"Because the prevailing wind now comes from the east, if the ash plume reaches five kilometers, it will likely affect areas in the west northwest of Taal and these are Cavite and Batangas," she said.

"If it (ash plume) reaches seven kilometers it will likely drift toward the western portion of Laguna," she said.

No weather disturbance is expected to affect the country this weekend, Clauren said.

She said the northeast monsoon would bring cloudy skies and scattered light rains over Cagayan Valley and Aurora. Metro Manila will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated light rains.

The Bicol region, Quezon and Northern Samar will have cloudy skies with scattered rains and thunderstorms due to the easterlies or warm air from the Pacific.

The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rains and thunderstorms.



Natural disasters: The new normal

BUSINESS MATTERS

GUILLERMO M. LUZ

Even by Philippine standards, we've had an unusual mix of natural disasters. Since April 2019, we have had earthquakes in Zambales (at magnitude 6.1; most heavily felt in Porac, Pampanga); Itbayat, Batanes (magnitude 5.9, July); and a series of earthquakes in fairly rapid succession in Cotabato and other parts of southwest Mindanao (from magnitude 6.5, October to December).

We also had our usual run of 20 typhoons closing out the year with Typhoons "Tisoy" (international name: Kammuri) and "Ursula" (Phanfone), the last one hitting parts of the Philippines on Christmas Day.

And now, we've opened 2020 with the eruption of Taal Volcano on Jan. 12 and the rapid spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the region.

Welcome to the new normal: the world of natural disasters. It's a world that will likely keep on this trend, so we are going to have to learn to deal with it and prepare for it.

When we were founded in 2009, the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) was originally set up to respond to natural disasters after they had occurred. We went into disaster relief mode in the immediate aftermath of disasters and then into recovery mode to try to restore things back to normal and strengthen them against future occurrences. In 2013, through Super typhoon "Yolanda" (Haiyan), we saw that nature had changed and realized that our planning paradigm had to shift along with it.

As we mobilized for relief and recovery during the immediate post-Yolanda period, we began our shift and reorganization into an enterprise focused on resilience. We identified four main natural risks and began to prepare for them: typhoons, earthquakes, volcanoes, and pandemics. Little did we realize

that in just a matter of years, several of these risks could arise in quick succession and even simultaneously as we are now seeing.

We opened our prototype Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in June 2016 and our expanded EOC in Clark in April 2018. In 2019, we saw the pace of work change as the extra challenge of multiple earthquakes began to get into the mix of the usual typhoons. Fortunately, a network of corporations organized into eight clusters has always been ready to respond to help communities in times of need. All told, the PDRF has 100 companies working across these clusters, each able to supply a critical item during an emergency, from line repairmen for power and telecommunications, to water supply, generators and fuel, relief goods, medical assistance, and logistics services (trucking and air freight). By assembling these pieces into a cohesive package of assistance, the PDRF has been able to work closely with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and different government agencies to deliver help to disaster-stricken areas.

From January to November 2019, the PDRF mobilized 1,800,000 liters of drinking water, 91 metric tons of relief goods, and 88,000 ready-to-eat meals and family food packs, for instance. This excludes items mobilized for Typhoons Tisoy and Ursula, Mindanao earthquakes, and Taal Volcano, which still presents an ongoing danger.

Preparing for this new normal has involved a lot of planning and training across a broad

sector of society—communities and barangays (which we do through our Community Resilience program); micro-, small-, and medium-scale businesses (our Business Continuity Program); national and local government (our Service Continuity Program); large businesses and NGOs (through PrepLab); and other specialized training programs.

Another level of preparedness lies in investing in better, stronger infrastructure. Programs such as Safe Schools (with the Department of Education), Safe Hospitals (with the Department of Health), Getting Airports Ready for Disasters (with the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, the United Nations Development Programme, and DHL), and Safe Ports (with the Philippine Ports Authority and private and international partners) will all now need to be accelerated to cope with the new normal.

Finally, our third level of preparation (actually the basis for all actions) is the investment in science. We can't say enough about the work and efforts of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), which monitors our active volcanoes and earthquake fault systems to give us a better understanding of what's happening and how to stay safe. Their scientific research and continuous monitoring of Taal Volcano prepare us for what lies ahead. We owe it to them, and ourselves, to carefully listen to the signs that Nature is sending us.

Thank you, Phivolcs.

Guillermo M. Luz is chief resilience officer of the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (www.pdrf.org).

Business Matters is a project of the Makati Business Club (makatibusinessclub@mbc.com.ph).



Fake environmentalists?

“
Unfortunately on the issue of sewage and treatment facilities, one merely called for water conservation, while the other hardly raised a whimper.

If one were to tug at the conglomerate umbilicals of the two water concessionaires caught with onerous arrangements that effectively deny adequate capital investments that guarantee adequate, clean and safe water and its subsequent treatment, for those virtually trapped in the concession areas of both Maynilad and Manila Water, one might just see ironic paradoxes validating or denying each's environmental charge.

Just as bad as inflicting on the public unquestionably onerous provisions and simultaneously having the public pay for taxes both should be shouldering, there is now the additional issue of advanced “charges” for prospective investments in environmental cleanups and protection.

Worsening matters, two rabid nongovernment watchdogs seem to have tucked their tails between their



BYSTANDER

Dean de la Paz

Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go asked, “*Saan naman kayo nakakita ng kumpanya na hindi pa man naisasagawa ang mismong septic tank desludging nito, nangongolekta na sila agad ng ‘environmental charge’ sa kanilang mga consumers para rito. Ano ito: pay now, service never? (Where can you find a company who prematurely charges for their septic tank desludging and yet imposes an environmental charge from consumers for services yet undelivered? What is this: pay now, service never?)*”

At the core of Sen. Go's call is what he sees as an unfair precharging of specific services required of the concessionaires amid their charge to put up requisite sewage lines and treatment facilities. This is important. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has identified these gross inadequacies as one of the principal causes of pollution of the Manila Bay.

Both must remember that the scope of the services for which the public pays dearly inclusive of the taxes both concessionaires should be paying includes, not simply providing safe and clean water, but also sewage and treatment so we avoid turning Manila Bay into a giant backed-up toilet.

Despite such inadequacies, there are those who, by their rather uncharacteristic silence, appear to acquiesce, license and allow such.

Two stick out – Ecowaste Coalition and Pamalakaya.

Both are constant features of incendiary street protests despite competent and accessible

balls, rolled over, crawled under the sheets and joined in a bestial orgy of foursomes.

In a statement decrying uncalled for and uncontracted charges for expenses or expenditures that the water concessionaires have yet to sign on and therefore are left unperformed, Sen.

agencies under this government. The Ecological Waste Coalition is a nongovernment network of groups promoting environmental stewardship. Pamalakaya or the National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organizations is comprised of activist fisherfolk. It is a member of the Left-leaning militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

Unfortunately on the issue of sewage and treatment facilities, one merely called for water conservation, while the other hardly raised a whimper despite the severely negative impact on fish and aquatic ecosystems their constituencies thrive on.

Derelict of their self-defined charge to hold accountable those remiss of environmental responsibilities, both fuel fears of an insidious unholy matrimonial chord strung between big business and pseudo-environmental watchdogs who've effectively green-washed accused patrons.

“
Two rabid nongovernment watchdogs seem to have tucked their tails between their balls, rolled over, crawled under the sheets and joined in a bestial orgy of foursomes.

Inextricably entangled among the other businesses of both concessionaires, for Maynilad those include mining interests where the record is held for the country's biggest mining disaster. For Manila

Water, other interests include a property developer involved in a fatal explosion alternately blamed on poor sewage management to terrorism.

We cite these precedents to help appreciate some very critical environmental obligations and the investments necessary for those. Investments that should be capitalized over time as it is depreciated and gradually charged to us.

While their public persona and the businessmen behind these companies are known to regard the public welfare over profits, their actual record demands a review.



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'Beware of lead-tainted rat figurines'

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

An environmental group warned yesterday that it has found lead, a hazardous chemical, in a number of decorative rat figurines on sale in Manila for the Chinese New Year of the Metal Rat.

EcoWaste Coalition purchased 11 rat figurines from re-

tailers in Binondo and Quiapo ranging from P100 to P200 per set and had them screened for lead using an X-ray fluorescence (XRF) device.

Some of the items had a presence of lead, which is a heavy metal banned in paint formulations, at a toxic level.

"While five of the samples are luckily negative for lead

content, six had lead above the regulatory limit of 90 parts per million (ppm)," said Thony Dizon, chemical safety campaigner of EcoWaste.

Out of the 11 samples, the group detected lead ranging from 874 to 3,798 ppm in six samples. None of the 11 samples had product labeling information, and none of the

lead-painted ones provided any lead hazard warning.

"These adorable items can easily pass for toys, so it's very important to ensure that such items are guaranteed lead-safe," Dizon said.

A child can be exposed to lead when she or he plays with a lead-coated item, bites it and ingests the lead.



Vizcaya miners appeal to Duterte

SEEKING the help of President Rodrigo Duterte, more than 1,200 indigenous peoples (IPs) from Nueva Vizcaya marched to the Mendiola Peace Arch on January 16 over fear of losing about 3,000 jobs from the suspension of Didipio Mine's operations.

OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc. (OGPI) operated the Didipio Mine with a 25-year financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) as its mining license with the Philippine government.

The company's FTAA has not yet been renewed since its expiration on June 20, 2019, and thus, representatives from Barangay Didipio and other 10 mine impacted villages went to Manila to emphasize the benefits they received from the development programs of OGPI in their areas.

"When OGPI arrived, they gave us three of our basic needs. First, OGPI developed the roads

so that agricultural produce from Quirino and Vizcaya can be transported. Only they were able to do that. Second, they opened schools in our area so we don't have to go to other *barangay* (villages) for education. Most importantly, they gave us livelihood," Jolan Pugong, a Didipio resident, said.

Engineers and nurses who benefited from OGPI scholarship programs also joined the rally. They pointed out how Didipio Mine projects opened opportunities for more jobs and better health services for Nueva Vizcaya residents.

"When health facilities were built here in Didipio, a lot of sick patients were treated and received free medical check-ups. OGPI did not only serve Didipio but also adjacent *barangay*," Waynelyn Andres, a nurse, said.

Wilbur Habiling, a former OGPI scholar and now a mining

engineer, also reiterated OGPI's efforts gave Nueva Vizcaya residents the chance to receive accessible education.

"I saw how responsible OceanaGold is. We, the true residents of Didipio, speak the truth. What will happen to other scholars of the company if they cease operations?" he said.

Also a Didipio resident, Maddonna Dongiaho said more than 1,500 people will be directly and another 2,000 will be indirectly affected if OGPI's operations do not resume. Meanwhile, about 17,000 IPs in Didipio and adjacent *barangay* will also be impacted.

OGPI also helped found the Didipio Producers Cooperative and Didipio Community Development Corp., both farm and food cooperatives.

In July 2019, the Didipio Mine ceased major operations when a local government unit-spon-

sored barricade was set up. The Department of the Interior and Local Government sent a letter in November 2019 to the provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya to dismantle the barricade.

OGPI officials said the company has yet to resume operations awaiting renewal of their FTAA, which gives large-scale mining projects authority to operate for 25 years.

According to engineer Mario Ancheta, Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region 2 director, the decision of the President to sign an FTAA is based on recommendations by the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources and the MGB.

"The Didipio Mine has passed the bureau's evaluation and therefore, we have recommended the company to the Office of the President for its FTAA renewal," Ancheta said.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



Baguio rehab uubos ng ₱480M – DOT

Aabot sa P480 milyon ang pondong kakailanganin para sa rehabilitasyon ng Baguio City, ayon kay Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

Inihayag ito ni Puyat sa isang press conference na ginanap Biyernes nang umaga kung saan tinalakay ang kabuuang kundisyon ng Baguio City matapos ang kanilang pagbisita sa lungsod.

Sa nasabing press conference, inihayag ni Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong na kinakailangan na ng tulong ng kanilang lungsod dahil sa maruming hangin.

Noong 2019 aniya, umabot ng 1,767 ang nasawi dahil sa polusyon dahilan para makipag-ugnayan si Magalong sa DOT.

“Baguio is the 3rd dirtiest city in the Philippines, next to Cebu which is the second. Manila being the first,” pahayag naman ni Puyat.

Ayon kay Puyat, may inilaang P480 milyon ang DOT sa pamamagitan ng Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA). **(Risa Divina)**



EDITORIAL

Mapalad consumer sa Metro

KAHIT marami ang nagrereklamo sa halaga ng bayarin sa tubig, lumilitaw sa mga datos na pinakamababa pa rin ang singil sa tubig sa Metro Manila kumpara sa may 12 metro cities sa buong Pilipinas maging sa ibang siyudad sa Asia-Pacific region.

Ang mga consumer ng Metro Manila na kumokonsumo ng 10 cubic meters ng tubig kada buwan ay nagbabayad lamang ng P104 samantalang kung ikukumpara ang kaparehong konsumo, ang isang taga-Baguio ay nagbabayad ng P370.

Kasunod ng Baguio sa may pinakamataas na singil ay ang San Jose Del Monte na pangalawa sa may pinakamataas na water rate sa presyong P280 kada buwan.

Sa datos mula sa Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), mas mataas din ang binabayaran sa tubig ng mga consumer sa Angeles, Batangas, Bacolod, Cabanatuan, Cagayan de Oro, Dasmariñas, Metro Iloilo, Metro Cebu at Davao.

Ang water rate sa Metro Manila ay pinapatawan ng 12% value-added tax (VAT) at environmental charges.

Para sa mga consumer na gumagamit ng 20 cubic meters kada buwan, ang Davao City ay nagpapatupad ng pinakamababang rate na P281 at pangalawa naman sa pinakamababa ang Metro Manila na sumisingil ng P306.

Sa rate na ito, pinakamataas muli ang Baguio City na umaabot sa P775 ang singil kada 20 cubic meters na konsumo kada buwan.

Base naman sa comparative rates ng 2018 Global Water Intelligence Report, kung ikukumpara ang water rates sa mga siyudad sa Asya Pasipiko para sa mga consumer na gumagamit ng 15 cubic meters kada buwan, ang Metro Manila pa rin ang pinakamababa sa halagang P18.28 kada cubic meter.

Ang Sydney, Australia ang siyang may pinakamataas na rate sa presyong P99.63 per cubic meter kapag nai-convert ang rate sa Philippine peso gamit ang P53.33 exchange rate per US dollar.

Ibig sabihin nito, mapalad ang mga consumer ng tubig sa Metro Manila.



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VALENZUELA, FIRST IN CREATING ANTI-RED TAPE UNIT

HERE'S no stopping for Valenzuela Mayor Rex Gatchalian from implementing projects and programs aimed at further making the city more progressive and competitive as compared with other localities.

The latest of which is his first executive order this year calling for the creation of the "Anti-Red Tape Unit" in line with the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007 and Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018.

Mayor Rex said E.O. 2020-001 will ensure the local government's compliance to the mentioned laws.

The order will also enable the continuous improvement of the services being offered and monitor and evaluate the compliance of offices and issue notices/memorandum of warning to erring and/or non-complying employees and officials.

Valenzuela's ARTU shall initiate investigation upon receipt of a complaint regarding fixers, among others, recommend policies, processes and systems to improve regulatory management to increase the productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of offices, and perform such acts as may be necessary to attain the objectives of ease of doing business.

ARTA Director-General Jeremiah Beljica recently awarded the Certificate of Commendation to the city for its 'Paspas Permit' initiative, a 10-second business permit online application system.

Meanwhile, the mayor was gratified by the cooperation of over 18, 000 local business owners for paying their business taxes. 'Salamat po. It's all because of you our city can keep moving forward.'



Mayor Belmonte taps QC Human Milk Bank

Mayor Joy has tapped the city's Human Milk Bank to donate mother's milk for breastfeeding evacuees in Batangas province.

"Our Human Milk Bank at the Quezon City General Hospital will help breastfeeding mothers affected by the Taal Volcano eruption. Simpleng tulong para sa ating mga apektadong kababayan," she said.

The QCHMB will give 40 bottles (100 ml) of pasteurized human milk to some infants in the evacuation centers. If needed, Mayor Joy said 200 more milk bottles are available for immediate distribution.

"Bahagi ng programa ng Milk Bank ng QC General Hospital na magbigay ng gatas ng ina tuwing may kalamidad upang matiyak na may sapat na nutrisyon ang mga sanggol na nasa evacuation centers," said QCGH's Dr. Josephine Sabando.

Earlier, the mayor dispatched QC team to provide 360 blankets, 360 sleeping mats, 300 partition tents, and two mobile showers for the evacuees affected by the Taal eruption in Tanauan, Batangas.

"Patuloy tayong magtulungan upang mabilis na makabangon ang mga kababayan nating nasalanta at makabalik sa normal ang kanilang pamumuhay."