

DATE : 01-29 20

DAY : WEDNESDAY

**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## DENR chief to Manila Bay biz owners: Install sewer treatment plants

**E**NVIRONMENT Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said business establishments along Manila Bay are still required to put their own sewerage treatment plants (STPs) to prevent the discharge of untreated wastewater that contributes to water pollution.

Meeting with several guests, that include Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Danilo S. Lim; and Engr. Lito Abuyan, the New Zealand-based chemical engineer who designed the STP, before the ceremonial "Turn-On" event along Roxas Boulevard on Sunday, Cimatu reiterated the need for business establishments to comply with the order, or face the consequence.

One of the highlights of the first anniversary celebration of the Battle for Manila Bay, the Duterte administration's ambitious P4.7-billion, seven-year Manila Bay rehabilitation program, the commissioning of the STP expects to treat an average of 500,000 liters of water from three major esteros along Roxas Boulevard that drain to Manila Bay.

He said the DENR has already issued cease-and-desist orders to many business establishments during the past year for failing effluent standards for "Class SB" (Coastal and Marine Waters).

Class SB is the designated water quality for recreational Water Class 1, or areas regularly used by the public for bathing, swimming, skin diving and fishery, while Water Class 3, or spawning areas for bangus and similar species.

Cimatu said while Metro Manila households are already covered by the private water concessionaires of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), business establishments need to invest in such facility in compliance with existing policies, particularly Republic Act 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

He said even the Philippine Navy ~~mp~~ along Roxas Boulevard will



"Households, they are not required to put up STP. But business establishments along Manila Bay are required to put up their water treatment facilities."—Cimatu

soon construct its own STP.

"The Philippine Navy will have its own STP. I've already asked them to put up an STP," Cimatu told a group of fellow government officials during the STP Turn-On ceremony near the Manila Yacht Club on Sunday.

"Households, they are not required to put up STP. But business establishments along Manila Bay are required to put up their water treatment facilities," he insisted.

The DENR chief reported that coliform level in Manila Bay has greatly improved, but added that much needs to be done to achieve the desired water quality to make the waters of the historic bay "swimmable" as mandated by a decade-old Supreme Court continuing mandamus.

Citing data from the Environment Management Bureau, Cimatu earlier 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.

Meanwhile, 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.

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

The desired standard fecal coliform level in Manila Bay is 100 mpn/100ml based on its classification as Class SB coastal and marine water. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



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# Manila Standard

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# 'Declare Manila Bay reclamation-free zone'

By Willie Casas

**A**S THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources marks the first year of Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program with bragging about lower coliform levels in Manila city bayside, former Anakpawis Party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao urged Congress to pass House Bill 257 Declaring Manila Bay as "Reclamation-Free" Zone as serious measure for genuine rehabilitation.

"DENR's claim is so narrow that it could only cite positive indicators on the bay within the city of Manila, when legally it involves a coastline of 190 kilometers and near 200,000 hectares, from Bataan province in the north to Cavite in the South and they did so cited (sic) on

their very own Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program," the former lawmaker said in a press statement.

Also, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu cited that the fecal coliform at the Padre Faura outfall in Manila is down to 920,000 most probable number per 100 milliliter

(MPN/100mL), which was the lowest among with at Rajah Sulayman/Remedios drainage and at the Manila Yacht Club outfall, but is far away from its supposed level at 100 MPN/100mL to fall under the Class SB for coastal and marine water, as set by the Environmental Management Bureau.

At the same time, the urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY)-Metro Manila on Tuesday condemned Cimatu's "anti-poor" remarks on massive evictions of urban poor near Manila Bay.

Maristel Garcia, Kadamay Metro Manila spokesperson, questioned the degrading remarks of Cimatu against the poor and for blaming them as the core reason of the problem.



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# PEOPLES Tonight

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# As Taal simmers down, DENR steps in to manage trash from evacuees

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonmayuga

**T**AKING advantage of Taal's relative calmness over the past few days, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is stepping into the picture to help address the garbage problem in over 400 evacuation centers in Batangas, Laguna and Cavite.

Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said members of Task Force Basura composed of field personnel from various DENR Regional Offices, together with the DENR Central Office, will conduct an information drive on proper solid-waste management.

"You can expect us from the DENR that we will act on it as early as now,

rather than be taken aback by the mountains of garbage that will be produced because of this calamity in Taal Volcano," Antiporda said.

Antiporda has also appealed to the public to avoid donating single-use plastic cups, plates and utensils to evacuees, as these "environmentally unfriendly" items could create another problem.

"Plastic forks, spoons, cups, plates and coffee stirrers may be convenient, but they are wreaking havoc on the environment," Antiporda pointed out.

He lamented that "calamity and the displacement of individuals make proper waste management the last and least among the priorities of the people."

However, Antiporda assured that the DENR is willing to help affected local government units (LGUs) in

dealing with garbage resulting from Taal Volcano's activity.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said Taal Volcano remains under Alert Level 3, and reminded the public that sudden steam-driven, and even weak, phreatomagmatic explosions, volcanic earthquakes, ashfall and lethal volcanic gas expulsions can still occur and threaten areas within Taal Volcano Island and nearby lakeshores.

Phivolcs has recommended to prohibit human activities on Taal Volcano Island, as well as areas near Taal Lake, and communities west of the island within a 7-kilometer radius from the main crater must be strictly prohibited.

As such, Phivolcs advised LGUs to assess areas outside the 7-kilometer radius for damages and road accessibility, and to strengthen

preparedness, contingency and communication measures in case of renewed unrest.

"People are also advised to observe precautions due to ground displacement across fissures, frequent ashfall and minor earthquakes. Communities beside active river channels, particularly where ash from the main eruption phase has been thickly deposited, should increase vigilance when there is heavy and prolonged rainfall since the ash can be washed away and form lahars along the channels," Phivolcs said in its latest Volcano Bulletin issued at 8 a.m. on January 28.

The air space above Taal remains dangerous, and Phivolcs advised civil aviation authorities to put in place necessary measures as explosions and wind-remobilized ash may pose hazards to aircrafts.



# DENR to help LGUs clear Taal Volcano eruption garbage

By Joel dela Torre

**THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) vowed to help affected local government units (LGUs) in dealing with garbage problems resulting from the Taal Volcano eruption.**

Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda said the DENR has mobilized all its regional offices to assist in the management of solid waste on orders of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu.

An information drive on proper garbage handling has also been launched in evacuation centers in Batangas, Cavite and Laguna provinces in anticipation of the mountains of garbage piling up in areas where the "bakwits" are staying.

Although the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) has lowered the alert level

from 4 to 3, thousands are still in evacuation centers sending only some other members of the family to return and check their residences.

"Secretary Cimatu gave instruction that we come up with a joint operation by all DENR regional offices in the country to assist all those affected by the Taal Volcano eruption," Antiporda said.

The joint operation, which will be participated in by concerned personnel from the DENR central office in Quezon City, will be called "Task Force Basura."

Meanwhile, Antiporda appealed to the public to avoid donating single-use plastic cups, plates and utensils to evacuees as these "environmentally unfriendly" items could create another problem.

"Plastic forks, spoons, cups, plates, and coffee stirrers may be convenient, but they are wreaking havoc in the environment," Antiporda pointed out.

He added: "Calamity and the displacement of individuals make proper waste management the last and least among the priorities of the people."



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## 'Funds ready for Taal evacuees'

Malacañang has assured people displaced by Taal Volcano's continuing unrest that the government is ready to allot funds for their needs.

"The President always thinks of the safety of our countrymen. If necessary, he will allocate funds for them," presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said at a press briefing yesterday.

"The President's directive is always to secure their safety. So necessarily, all the appropriate agencies will respond to the directive," he added.

Panelo said local governments are already providing assistance to the evacuees.

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## Funds ready From Page 1

"If there is anything lacking, that's the time when the President would come in. But meanwhile, we are assisting in the evacuation," he said, adding that the military is providing transportation to groups giving relief to the displaced families.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will conduct an information campaign on proper waste disposal in evacuation centers for residents displaced by the eruption of Taal Volcano.

Alert Level 3 remained hoisted over the volcano in Batangas yesterday as the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) continued to record volcanic earthquakes in the past 24 hours.

"These earthquakes signify magmatic activity beneath the Taal edifice that could lead to eruptive activity at the main crater," Phivolcs said in its latest bulletin.

The amount of sulfur dioxide emitted by the volcano in the past 24 hours, however, was "below instrumental detection," the agency said. Sulfur dioxide is the main component of magma.

Phivolcs said the activity of Taal in the past 24 hours was characterized by a "weak to voluminous emission" of white to dirty white steam-laden plumes reaching 100 to 800 meters high that drifted southwest.

The Taal Volcano Network, which can record even small earthquakes, recorded 92 volcanic earthquakes, including four of low frequency.

Alert Level 3 means that sudden steam-driven and weak phreatomagmatic explosions, volcanic earthquakes, ashfall and lethal volcanic gas expulsions can still occur and threaten Volcano Island and nearby lakeshores, Phivolcs said.

The agency reminded the public that entry to Volcano Island as well as into areas over Taal Lake and communities west of the island within a seven-kilometer radius from the main crater is prohibited.

### Red Cross eyes rehab

With Phivolcs lowering Taal Volcano's alert status to Level 3, the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is set to shift its operation in the area to rehabilitation.

Sen. Richard Gordon, PRC chairman, after a discussion with Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas over the weekend, instructed PRC chapter administrator Ronald Generoso to conduct further discussion with the governor.

Mandanas disclosed that they are planning to put up tent cities where evacuees can stay until they can move back to their homes.

"We can provide family tents to each family where they can sleep with privacy. But we will also set up halls which will serve as their dining areas, separate tents for socialization activities, place of worship and other group activities," he assured the governor.

Gordon also disclosed there are national societies that committed to provide funding for the rehabilitation phase, which includes rebuilding damaged houses, schools and other buildings; providing livelihood and distributing cash grants.

"We are already coordinating with our partner national societies to ensure that, like how we worked in Yolanda, assistance will be distributed evenly to our target population, that the operation will be organized. What I am proposing is to use P2 million of the money that the Spanish Red Cross and the German Red Cross will donate to build houses. The important thing is to remove the pressure of evacuation from the schools so the children can resume their classes," the PRC chairman said.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the department's regional office will assist in the management of solid waste in evacuation centers in Batangas, Cavite and Laguna.

"You can expect from the DENR that we will act on it as early as now, rather than be taken aback by the mountains of garbage that will be produced as a result of this calamity brought by Taal Volcano," he added.

He also appealed to the public to avoid donating single-use plastic cups, plates and utensils to evacuees since these items are environmentally unfriendly and could create another problem.

"Plastic forks, spoons, cups, plates and coffee stirrers may be convenient, but they are wreaking havoc on the environment," Antiporda pointed out.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said there is no longer a need for the House of Representatives to approve the P30-billion supplemental budget for the rehabilitation of areas devastated by the eruption of Taal Volcano.

"I don't think there's a need for supplemental fund. No more need for a supplemental budget. We thought the eruption would go full blast that's why we needed P30 billion to rebuild facilities, public infrastructure and livelihood support," he said.

Salceda, chairman of the House committee on ways and means, said the proposal could be converted to a more developmental purpose.

"What we need is a more developmental approach to the impacts of Taal eruption by way of creating south of Manila growth corridor, a re-launch of the Calabarzon," Salceda said. "It will be part of the regular developmental process."

He said the government has enough calamity funds even if the proposed P20 billion was reduced to P16 billion in the General Appropriations Act for this year, because this was augmented by an unused P7 billion in the 2019 budget that was carried over.

All in all, this year's budget for disasters is P23 billion. — **Alexis Romero, Helen Flores, Rhodina Villanueva, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Delon Porcalla, Jose Rodel Clapano**





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MARAMI na ang nakauwi sa kanilang mga tahanan na biktima ng Bulkan Taal na sumabog.

Lahat nagpapasalamat sa Diyos na humuhupa na rin ang Taal na nang sumabog ay umabot sa 500,000 tao ang nadiskarilan at nangamba sa kanilang buhay.

Sa kanilang pag-uwi, nakalaya na sila sa mga evacuation center na, aminin natin o hindi, puno ng hindi magandang kalagayan.

Kahit magsimula muli sila sa wala o kakaunti, walang kapalit ang makabalik sa sariling tahanan.

Kahit pa may mga nasiraan ng tahanan o nawalan ng kabuhatan, iba pa rin ang makauwi sa sariling barangay, bayan at tahanan.

### PERMANENT DANGER ZONE

Ang hindi na lamang pupwedeng bumalik ay mga sakop ng permanent danger zone na 6-7 kilometro na sinusukat mula sa bunganga ng bulkan.

Sa permanent danger zone, wala ni sinoman ang papayagang magtayo ng bahay bagama't pupwede silang maghanapbuhay sa loob nito.

Kabilang sa mga hindi pupwedeng bumalik ang mga may bahay na tinamaan ng mga bitak ng lupa na umaabot naman ng 14 kilometro mula sa bulkan.

Matagal-tagal na magtitilis ang marami sa mga ito sa mga evacuation center o kaya'y sa piling ng kanilang mga kamag-anak o kaibigan na handang kumupkop sa kanila.

Kailangan nilang hintayin matapos ang mga housing project na ibibigay o itatayo para sa kanila o mismong sila ang magtatayo.

### HANAPBUHAY

May mga madaling makakita ng hanapbuhay gaya ng mga mangingisda na dati nang nabubuhay sa Taal Lake.

Ang mga magsasaka, maaaring may maani pa rin silang mga pananim na pupwedeng ibenta.

May mga pananim namang madaling lumaki at anihin.

Madidiskarte at matitiyaga ang mga Filipino, ang mga Batangeny, kaya tiyak na makababangon sila mula sa delubyo.

Kung paano nakabangon ang mga biktima ng Bulkan Pinatubo, tiyak na ganito rin



NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

## TAAL COMMISSION AT PINATUBO COMMISSION

ang mga biktima ng Taal.

### AYUDA KAILANGAN

Talaga namang krisis sa buhay ang dinanas ng mga biktima.

At marami sa mga ito ang matagal bago makayanang mabuhay nang normal.

Kaya naman, dapat ang agarang pag-ayuda sa kanila, lalo na mula sa mga pamahalaang nasuyunal at lokal.

Maaari ring tumulong ang iba pa, kasama ang mga pribadong kompanya.

Isa sa mga nangangailangan ng ayuda ang may kukumpunihing tahanan na winasak ng bulkan gaya ng mga dinaganan ng mga abo.

Kailangan ding magkaroon ng puhunan para sa mga ganap na nawalan ng panghanapbuhay.

Ang ibang nawalan, pupwede ring maisama sa mga pagawaing bayan sa mga panahong ito gaya ng paglilinis sa lahat ng lugar na nasalanta o sa mga nagkaaberyang mga imprastraktura.

Pupwede ring kunin ang mga ito na maging bahagi ng lakas-paggawa sa programang rehabilitasyon na maaaring matagal ng 1, 2, 3 taon.

### TAAL COMMISSION

Marami talaga ang napinsala ng Bulkan Taal kaya may nagmumungkahi na magtatag ang pamahalaan ng komisyon para hawakan ang rehabilitasyon o pagbangon muli ng mga nasalanta.

Siyempre pa, magkaroon ang komisyon ng mga mangangasiwa, pondo, gamit at iba pa para gawin ang rehabilitasyon.

Maganda ang pagtatag ng komisyon upang maging sentro ng awtoridad ng lahat ng mga ahensya ng gobyerno na sasali rito.

Hindi'yung magtuturan ang mga opisyal at ahensya ng gobyerno kung sino ang maunang kumilos o magbitiw ng pondo o magiging boss sa programang rehabilitasyon.

Karaniwang may agawan ng pagiging boss sa watak-watak na ahensya ng gobyerno at nagaganap ito kung nagkakainteres na ang mga nag-

aagawan sa salapi o pondong ibubuhos para sa mga proyektong ikababangon ng mga Batangeny mula sa krisis at kalamidad.

### PINATUBO COMMISSION

May P10 bilyon ang pondo ng Mt. Pinatubo Commission at walong taon itong nabuhay para alalayan ang lahat ng mga biktima ng sumabog na Bulkan Pinatubo.

Naitayo naman ang mga housing project sa tatlong lalawigan na binuo ng halos 49,000 unit at pinangunahan ng Philippine Navy engineers ang paggawa.

Naipamigay rin ang karamihan sa mga titulo ng lupa makaraan ang 22 taon.

Pero ang isang mahalagang usapin dito, tinadit ito ng korapsyon.

Ang megadike lang na nagkahalaga ng P2.7 bilyon ay naging substandard umano at maraming bahagi nito ang nasisira tuwing rarasaga ang mga lahar at baha sa mga tag-ulan sa ilang taon.

Nalugi umano ang gobyerno ng halagang halos P40 milyon dito.

Pero ang megadike mismo ay may iba pang mga anomalya umano, kasama ang mga housing project na may pagbili ng mga pribadong lote.

Ginamit ang salitang emergency para hindi daraan sa pasubasta ang mga proyekto at dito na umano nanginain ang mga korap na opisal ng gobyerno, kasabwat ang mga kontraktor at suplayer ng materyales.

Magkano sa P10B pondo ang totoong nagamit para sa mga biktima at para sa mga imprastraktura ng pamahalaan?

Sana naman, hindi putaktihin ng mga korap, nangongomisyon at iba pa ang P30-P50 bilyong pondo para sa Taal Commission.

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





## LGU role in solid waste a hurdle in waste-to-energy projects

A BILL outlining the regulatory regime for waste-to-energy facilities is encountering various hurdles because local governments, which are now responsible for managing solid waste, may not have the resources to pursue such projects.

"There are two constraints. From the hearing, I can see that this is a very complicated bill," Senator Sherwin T. Gatchalian, who proposed the bill, told reporters after a Senate hearing on the measure Tuesday.

"Complicated in a sense *na ang* (that) solid waste management is a devolved function to the local government. But... waste-to-energy (involves) high capital expenditure, meaning you need scale, *kailangan mo malakihan* (You need a big investment)," he added.

Mr. Gatchalian introduced Senate Bill No. 363 in July during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress. The proposed legislation seeks to establish a national energy policy and framework for facilities using waste-to-energy (WTE) technologies.

He said reconciling the devolved function of solid waste management and the big investment needed to build a WTE facility is complicated as many local government units (LGU) do not produce enough waste; neither do they have the financial capability to finance a project to generate energy from waste.

Mr. Gatchalian earlier said that the passage of the bill would

help solve the country's perennial garbage problem. He had said that the measure will not only encourage the development of new technologies in the treatment and disposal of solid waste, but also supports the expansion of bioenergy to attain sustainable energy.

During the hearing, he asked the departments of Energy, Environment and Natural Resources, and Science and Technology to come up with a comprehensive study on waste-to-energy facilities.

"What we want is for these three departments to get together, come up with a preliminary study to look at the capacity, to look at the potential for energy, to look at the environmental concerns as raised by some sectors so that we will have some preliminary idea on how waste to energy can solve our solid waste issues," he said.

He said WTE facilities, which convert non-recyclable waste materials into useable heat, electricity or fuel through a variety of processes, could be the solution as the three Rs — reuse, recycle and reduce — have proven to be a failure.

"Less than 30% of the barangays conduct three Rs, 70% *tinatapon lang kahit saan saan* (70% throw their garbage anywhere)," he said.

"On top of that, we have 330 open dumpsites. In the law that was passed 20 years ago, *bawal*

*na ang* open dumpsites (open dumpsites are not allowed), but because of financial and logistical issues, *meron pa tayong* open dumpsites (we still have them)," he said.

Ahead of the bill's passage, local government units such as Davao City and Puerto Princesa City have embarked on WTE projects.

Tristan Dwright P. Domingo, assistant administrator of Davao City, said the city government is trying to "lobby" the national government for P3 billion to help fund the project.

In 2018, the city secured a 5.013 billion yen, or P2.5 billion, grant from the Japanese government for the development of waste-to-energy facilities in Davao City. The project was meant to be an innovative example of sustainable waste management for other cities to emulate.

"Right now, as part of our commitment before we fully utilize the funds we have to have this final feasibility study," he said in an interview after the Senate hearing.

He said the study, which is now focused on the financial aspect of the project, is scheduled to be completed next month.

"From there, we'll decide whether to push through with the project or not. If the financial side tells us that it is not viable for us, then the grant would be returned to the Japanese government," he said.— **Victor V. Saulon**



**CONTRACT BREACH**

# **BATAAN LANDFILL OPERATOR CITED FOR ENVIRONMENT, TAX OFFENSES**

HERMOSA, BATAAN—The local government on Tuesday issued notices of violations to a company operating a sanitary landfill here for environmental offenses and nonpayment of municipal tax.

Hermosa Mayor Jopet Inton said the Econest Waste Management Corp. had violated the “no segregation, no collection” policy under the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act No. 9003).

“Econest even accepts garbage from Quezon City when under our agreement only garbage from Hermosa [town] and Bataan [province] should be accepted in its landfill,” Inton told the Inquirer.

He said Econest also violated a contract with the local government when it failed to share a portion of its income from the landfill operation with Hermosa. The company, the mayor said, would not even allow municipal employees to inspect its facility located in Barangay Mambog here.

An Econest officer said the company would review the notices issued against it and would seek help from environmental experts to determine if it committed the violations.

Econest was established on July 6, 2017, under a public-private partnership arrangement with the Hermosa government.

Inton said under the arrangement, the Hermosa government would dump its garbage at the landfill free of charge. “But lately we were being charged already,” he said.

—GREG REFRACCION INQ



EDITOR: Boyet Jadulco / Twitter: @bjadulco

MIYERKOLES / ENERO 29, 2020

## CBCP SA MGA BANGKO: TIGIL PONDO SA COAL

MAGKAKAPIT-BISIG ang mga religious leader at civil society organization para ikampanya ang pagkalas ng mga bangko sa coal project sa bansa.

Binansagang 'Withdraw from Coal', ilulunsad ang kampanya sa pamamagitan ng press conference ngayong umaga sa isang restawran sa Quezon City Memorial Circle.

Kabilang sa plano ng grupo ay bigyan ng grado ang mga bangko depende sa laki ng pinagamit nilang pondo sa coal project.

Kasama sa mga magiging speaker sina Bishop Gerry Alminaza at Gerry Arances ng Center for Energy, Ecology and Development.

Nais din ng mga obispo sa bansa na kausapin si Department Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu dahil sa lumalalang problema ng polusyon dulot ng sangkaterbang coal-fired power plant sa bansa.

Sa liham na pinadala kay Cimatu, binanggit ng mga obispo na sana'y buksan ng kalihim ang kanyang mata at tenga para maramdaman ang hinaing ng mga tao sa unti-unting pagkasira ng ating mundo.

"You, Secretary Cimatu, are blessed with a most valuable position as a steward of creation as head

of the DENR. It is a place to not only preserve the beauty of Creation, but also to uphold the dignity of human life." ayon sa liham na may petsang Enero 26, 2020.

"We invite you to open your eyes and ears to the cry of our people, and the cry of our deteriorating Earth," diin pa sa liham.

Ang liham ay pirmado ng 13 obispo sa pangu- nguna ni Kidapawan Bishop Jose Colin M. Baga- foro, chairman, CBCP Episcopal Commission on Social Action, Justice and Peace.

Ayon sa kanila, ang standards on pollution na pinatutupad ng DENR ay hindi sapat para mapro- tektahan ang mga tao.

Dahil dito, naitala ng World Health Organiza- tion ang Pilipinas bilang ikatlo sa may pinakara- ming namatay dahil sa air pollution.

"It is because of these pitiful measures that coal and other polluting industries are able to spew poi- son into our atmosphere, further exacerbating our people's vulnerabilities in the context of both man- made and natural disasters." ayon pa sa kanila.

Mayroon 29 coal-fired power plant sa bansa na siyang nagpapasama sa kalidad ng hangin.



## Single-use plastic 'wag i-donate

Umapela kahapon ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa publiko na iwasang mag-donate ng single-use plastic cups, plates, at utensils sa evacuees ng pagsabog ng Bulkang Taal.

Sa pamamagitan ng "Task Force Basura," sinabi ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu na ang lahat ng kanyang regional offices sa buong bansa ay inaasahang aayuda sa tamang solid waste management sa evacuation centers sa Batangas, Cavite, at Laguna.

Sinabi ni Undersecretary for solid waste management Benny Antiporda na "there will be representatives per region

that will assist evacuees when it comes to environmental issues, particularly solid waste management."

Umapela siya siya sa publiko na huwag nang mag-donate ng single-use plastic cups, plates at utensils sa evacuees dahil ang mga ito ay "environmentally unfriendly" items na maaaring lumikha ng isa pang problema.

"Plastic forks, spoons, cups, plates, and coffee stirrers may be convenient, but they are wreaking havoc on the environment," paliwanag ni Antiporda.

**Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz**



# DRAGON BOAT RACE BALIK NA SA BORACAY

**TULUYAN nang inalis ng Inter-Agency Task Force ang suspensyon sa dragon boat race sa Boracay.**

Ayon sa liham ng Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group General Manager Natividad Bernardino kay Malay Acting Mayor Froilbar Bautista, epektibo agad ang pagsasawalang-bisa sa nasabing

suspensyon.

Dahil dito, maaari nang magsagawa ng kahit anong aktibidad ang apat na grupo na mayroon sa tanyag na isla.

Kaugnay nito, pinaalalahanan ng task force ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Malay, Akjan at ang Philippine Coast Guard na kailangang mahigpit na ipatupad ang Executive Order No. 037 series of 2019 o "An

Order Setting the Guidelines for Dragon Boat Trainings" sa naturang bayan na siyang may hurisdiksyon sa Boracay.

Kung maaalala, sinuspinde ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Secretary Roy Cimatu ang lahat ng dragon boat activities sa isla kasunod ng trahedyang nangyari sa dagat noong Setyembre 25, 2019, kung saan pitong paddlers ng Dragon Force team ang nasawi habang 14 ang nakaligtas.



## Dragon Boat race, puwede na ulit sumagwan

INALIS na ng Inter-Agency Task Force ang suspensyon sa dragon boat race sa Boracay.

Sa liham na ipinadala ni Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group General Manager Natividad Bernardino kay Malay Acting Mayor Frolibar Bautista, epektibo agad ang pagsasawalang bisa sa nasabing suspensyon.

Nangangahulugan ito na maaari nang magsagawa ng kahit anong aktibidad ang apat na grupo na mayroon sa tanyag na isla.

Kaugnay nito, pinaalalahanan ng task force ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Malay, Aklan at ang Philippine Coast Guard na kailangang mahigpit na ipatupad ang Executive Order No. 037 series of 2019 o "An Order Setting the Guidelines for Dragon Boat Trainings" sa naturang bayan na siyang may hurisdiksyon sa Boracay.

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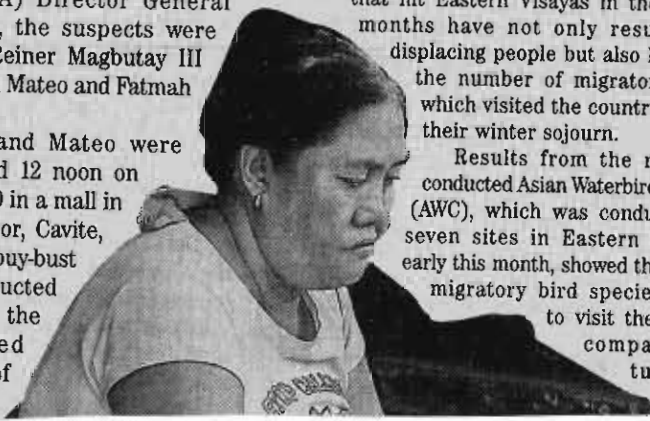
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# Fewer migratory birds sighted

Three big-time suspected drug pushers were arrested during separate buy-bust operations in a mall in Cavite that also resulted to the confiscation of suspected shabu amounting to P6.8 million.

According to Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Director General Aaron Aquino, the suspects were identified as Reiner Magbutay III alias Tan, Kevin Mateo and Fatmah Ali Alangadi.

Magbutay and Mateo were arrested around 12 noon on 23 January 2020 in a mall in Molino IV, Bacoor, Cavite, while another buy-bust operation conducted a day after in the same mall led to the arrest of Alangadi.



**By Elmer Recuerdo**

TACLOBAN CITY – Strong typhoons that hit Eastern Visayas in the recent months have not only resulted to displacing people but also lessened the number of migratory birds which visited the country during their winter sojourn.

Results from the recently conducted Asian Waterbird Census (AWC), which was conducted in seven sites in Eastern Visayas early this month, showed that fewer migratory bird species came to visit the region compared to turnouts in

the previous years.

According to Ingelina Lantajo, focal person from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the conduct of the waterbird count, "The recent typhoons "Tisoy" and "Ursula," which caused some damage to our mangrove areas, may have displaced the migratory birds."

Despite the low turnout, rare migratory birds were sighted in the waterbird count to include a northern pintail duck at Lake Bito. Other species recorded were the great egret, great knot, gray heron, common sandpiper, golden plover and the white-collated kingfisher.

"The presence of these waterbirds is an indication that although some of our mangrove areas may have been damaged by recent natural calamities, there are

still healthy wetlands for migratory birds seeking food and shelter away from the colder climate where they originally came from," DENR OIC-Regional Executive Director Tirso Parian Jr. said.

Among the sites where the census was conducted include the Ormoc Bay Wetlands, Lake Bito Inland Wetland in MacArthur town, Carigara Bay Wetlands and the Tres Marias Islands in Palompon, all in the province of Leyte.

Also included in the census are the Southern Leyte Bird Sanctuary in St. Bernard, the Maqueda Bay Wetlands in the towns of Motiong, Jiabong and Paranas in Samar, and at the Guiuan Intertidal Flats in Eastern Samar.

Results of the waterbird census will be collated and analyzed while recommendations will be formulated to contribute in local and global conservation activities such as species

and site conservation and research programs and campaign plans to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands presence in communities.

The AWC is an annual event that runs parallel to other international censuses in Africa, Europe and Neotropics under the umbrella of the International Waterbird Census.



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**Winter sojourn** A flock of migratory birds, believed to have come from colder countries, swarm this fishpond in Obando, Bulacan for an abundant meal of fingerlings.

ROMAN PROSPERO @tribunephi\_RRP



TITLE:

**READY FOR SUMMER CLIMB**



**CAMP SITE** A group of climbers sets up camp near Lake Venado, below the summit of Mt. Apo. —JEFFREY MAITEM

## MT. APO TRAILS IN DAVAO DEL SUR SAFE FOR CLIMBERS AFTER QUAKES

DIGOS CITY—The series of earthquakes that rocked parts of Mindanao last year had not damaged trails in Davao del Sur province leading to Mt. Apo, the country's highest peak.

Local mountaineering groups said a recent assessment showed that the local trails were safe and open to climbers.

An environment official said that unlike the trails in the towns of Magpet, Makilala and Kidapawan, City in Cotabato province which had been closed to trekkers, the Davao del Sur trails, such as those in Sta. Cruz and Bansalan towns and Digos City, remained open following the strong earthquakes in October and December.

Mt. Apo, at 2,954 meters (9,692 feet) above sea level, offers panoramic views and adventures to climbers who flock there during the annual summer climb.

### Assessment

Jayvee Agas, head of the regional public affairs office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said the Cotabato trails had yet to be opened by local governments there due to the danger of landslides.

Rye Glenn Trinidad, vice president of the Mindanao Mountaineering Federation Inc. in Davao del Sur, said his group and the Digos City Active Mountaineers conducted a trail assessment to prepare climbers for a tree planting

activity on Mt. Apo from Jan. 30 to Feb. 2.

He said the groups were expecting to draw about 250 climbers to join the event, which was originally scheduled on Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 last year but was postponed following the earthquakes.

According to Trinidad, only 50 climbers a day will be allowed on Mt. Apo's peak when this year's climbing season begins on Feb. 3.

### Limited access

Climbers are asked to stay on the summit only until 2 p.m. as the area will be off limits at night, according to the guidelines issued by the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB). The DENR and PAMB have imposed window hours for climbers to prevent forest fires that had destroyed a large part of Mt. Apo's forest in previous years.

Agas also reminded climbers that swimming in Lake Venado was prohibited and they should bring their garbage when they return to their camps.

All climbers, she added, must secure permits from the local government and undergo an orientation before the climb.

Over a thousand residents in four villages at the foot of Mt. Apo in Kidapawan took refuge in the city's evacuation sites after the 6.6-magnitude quake on Oct. 29 left ground fissures near their houses, prompting the government to declare these areas as no-build zones. —ORLANDO DINOY INQ



# BINHI Saving native and endemic trees

BY JED MACAPAGAL

As the country's leader in geothermal power with over 1,400 megawatts (MW) of capacity under its belt, Lopez-led power generation firm Energy Development Corp. (EDC) is pushing its renewable efforts further with its initiatives for the replenishment of streams.

In 2009, the company started BINHI, its flagship environmental program which serves as a nationwide greening and reforestation program of native and endemic trees.

EDC said since its geothermal operations are located in forested areas, there is great reliance on healthy watersheds as trees can help maintain geothermal reservoirs by holding water and releasing them deep into the earth.

As of 2018, the BINHI program has identified and rescued 96 species of prime and endangered Philippine hardwood, apart from raising 175,685 seedlings, distribution and planting of 3,214 hectares with the help of 173 partner organizations and 88 farmers associations.

It also managed to restore local forestlands with over 6.4 million of trees over thousands of hectares to preserve and propagate threatened native tree species and protect biodiversity as well as purify rainwater before being released into natural channels such as streams and groundwater reserves.

Under the BINHI program, EDC works with the academe to provide technical assistance, facilities, and training and capacity-building sessions.

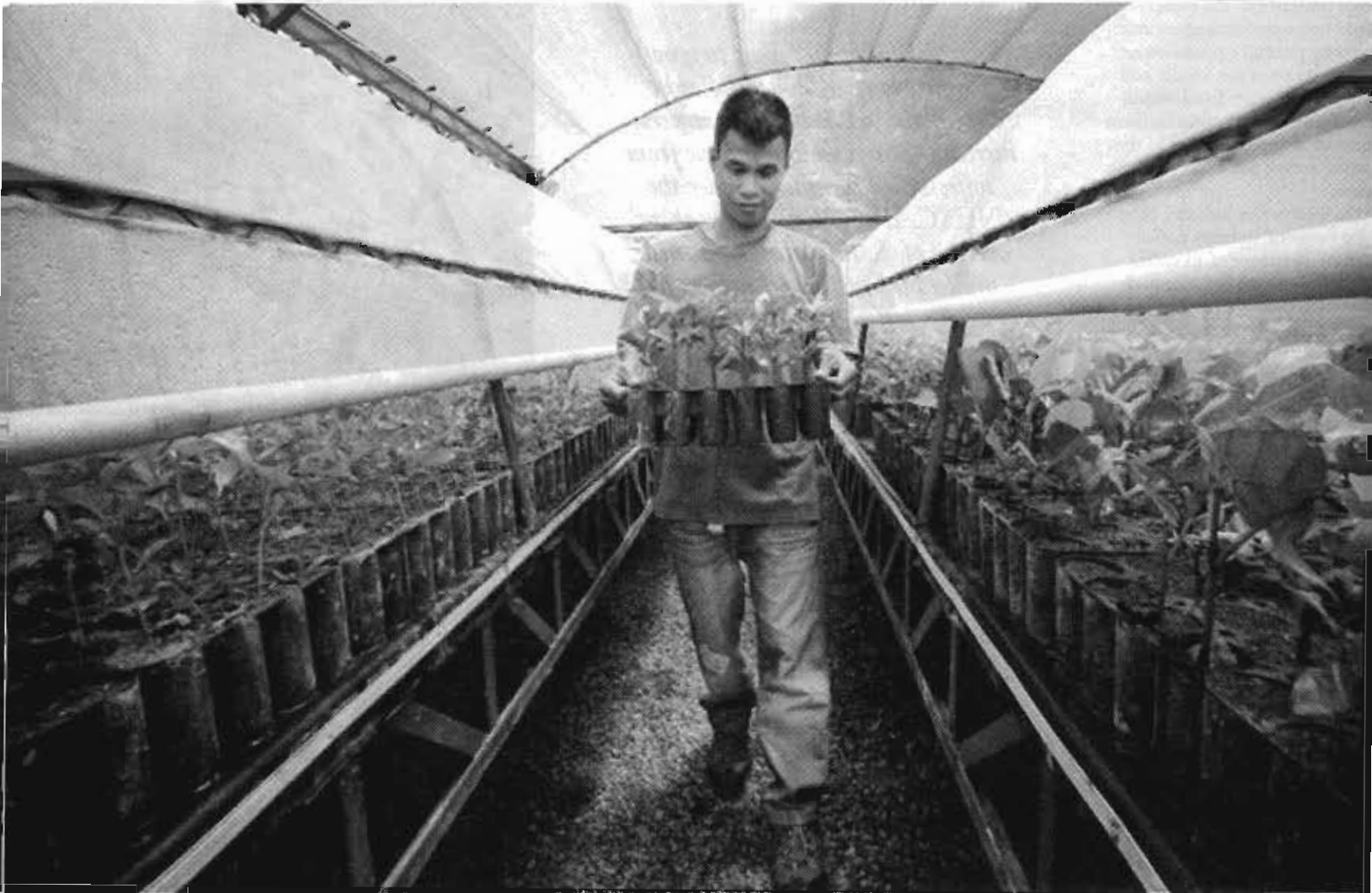
The company recently partnered with the University of San Carlos in Cebu to grow and propagate premium Philippine native tree species such as Narra, Mangkono and Molave. This is the company's 11th arboretum since 2008.

As part of the agreement, the school will host a permanent designated area for the trees, supported by planting and promotional activities. EDC provided seedlings along with technical assistance for the protection and maintenance of the trees, including labeling and scientific monitoring.

Early last year, the company also adopted the 7.79-hectare Wetland No. 2 in Boracay island to turn it into an eco-tourism park by putting up another arboretum aside from walkway, view deck, visitor information center and other amenities that will be turned over to the government after three years.

*The BINHI program has identified and rescued 96 species of prime and endangered Philippine hardwood, apart from raising 175,685 seedlings, distribution and planting of 3,214 hectares with the help of 173 partner organizations and 88 farmers associations.*

CONT: SAVING NATIVE & ENDEMIC TREES



BINHI is EDC's flagship environmental program which serves as a nationwide greening and reforestation program of native and endemic trees.



# Promoting conservation, sustainability

BY JED MACAPAGAL

As a coal mining and coal-fired power plant operator, Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) has always been the target of criticisms by environmental groups.

Often overlooked, however, are the company's efforts to transform Semirara Island into a cradle of giant clams and other high-valued commercial organisms like abalone, spiny lobsters and mud crabs.

With the establishment of SMPC's Semirara Marine Hatchery Laboratory (SMHL) in 2010, the company aims to host the most advanced resource and development center to promote the conservation, sustainability and environmental enhancement by improving marine biodiversity, fishery resources and habitats.

SMP focuses on the spawning of giant clams which provide shelter to seaweeds, sea sponges and other marine organisms. Giant clams help clean pollutants and produce food for

*Through the hatchery laboratory, SMPC aims to host the most advanced resource and development center to promote the conservation, sustainability and environmental enhancement by improving marine biodiversity, fishery resources and habitats.*

other marine species.

The giant clams which are also popular for their local name taklobo, likewise serve as an indicator of good water quality in the area despite ongoing coal mining operations. This is because these creatures cannot thrive in a polluted environment.

At present, the lab is spawning at least eight species of giant clams including True Giant Clam; Smooth Giant Clam; Fluted Giant Clam; Boring Giant Clam; Noah's Giant; Small Giant Clam; Strawberry Giant Clam; and Porcelain Giant Clam.

From the initiative of reseed- ing 150 giant clams on the island's coastline in 2006, SMPC expanded the hatchery and has survived 163,267 giant clams to date, of which 80,146 have been reseeded.

Meanwhile, 50 giant clams from the hatchery were trans-

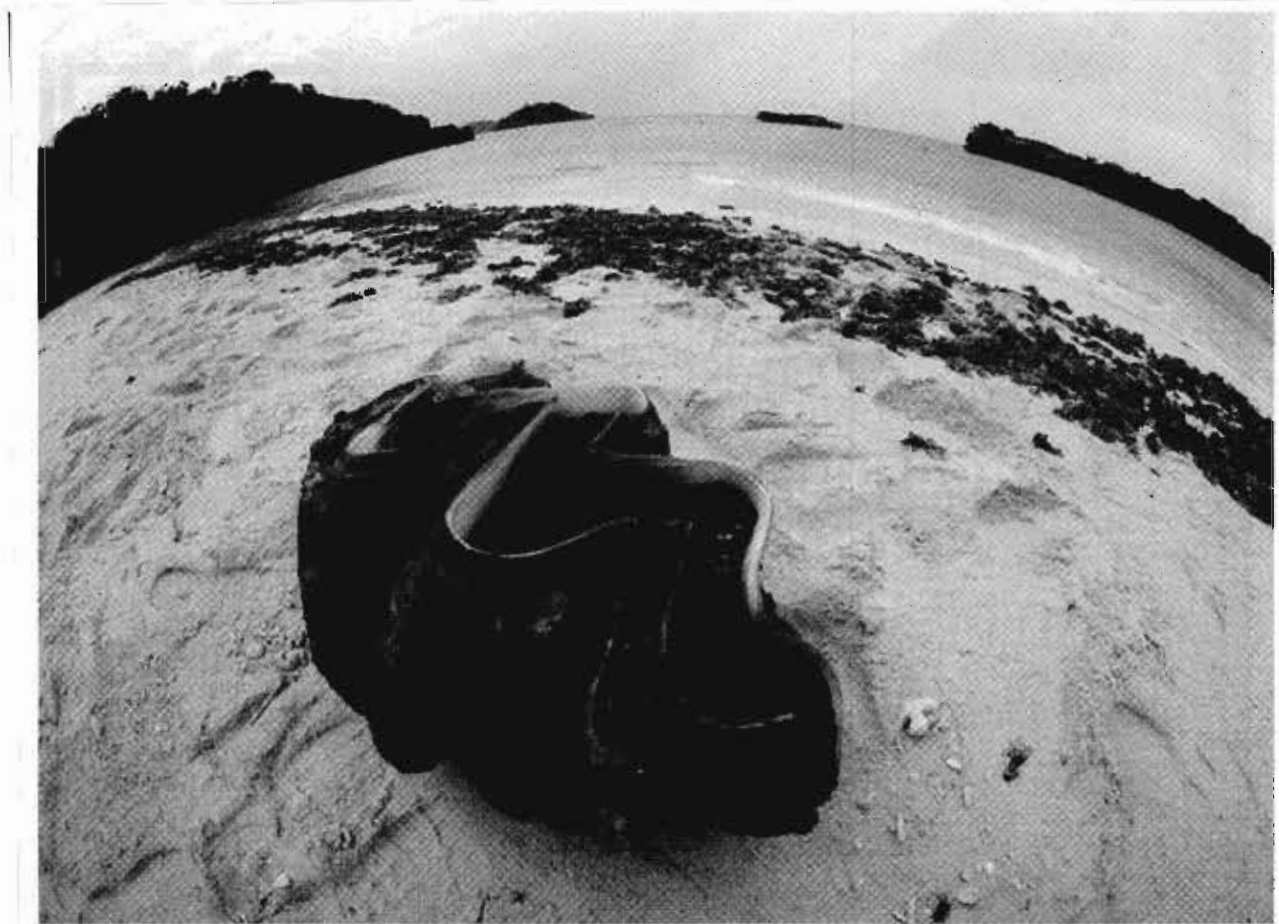
ferred and spawned along the shoreline of SMPC's power operations in Calaca town in Batangas province.

In 2015, a team of marine biologists from the Silliman University Angelo King Center for Research and Environmental Management led by National Scientist Angel Alcala, conducted a survey of the whole coastal area of Semirara Island. The results of the study showed contrary to expectations for mining areas, the reefs surveyed had extensive coverage of live hard coral cover and relatively high fish biomass and density.

Likewise, SMPC also formed linkages with other eminent figures in marine biology to further improve SMHL's efficiency including two other National Scientists Gavino Trono and the late Edgardo Gomez.



CONT: PROMOTING CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABILITY



The company has been working to transform Semirara Island into a cradle of giant clams and other high-valued commercial organisms like abalone, spiny lobsters and mud crabs.



# Reclamation plans bad news for bay's 200K winged visitors

By Jhesset O. Enano  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Land reclamation projects on Manila Bay threaten to displace as many as 200,000 waterbirds that pass through the country during their migration in winter months, according to the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP).

These birds include several endangered and vulnerable species whose fragile populations may be decimated once coastal development projects push through in Metro Manila, Bulacan and Cavite provinces, and other areas.

"They can really be pushed to extinction," said Cristina Cinco, WBCP vice president, in an interview on Tuesday. "Similar to a food chain, once you cut one, the others [in the system] will be affected."

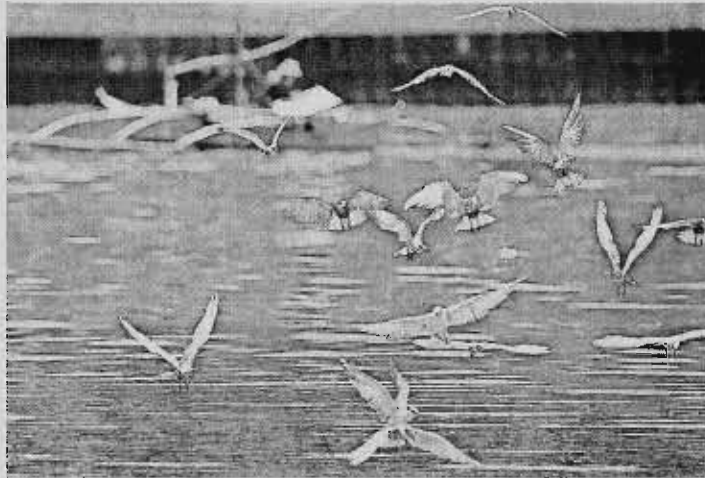
Despite fierce opposition from environmental groups and some government officials, several reclamation projects spanning several cities and provinces are still slated on Manila Bay.

Among the bigger projects is the proposed international airport in Bulacan province, which experts say will destroy hectares of mangroves and worsen flooding in coastal towns.

Cinco said this development was also expected to adversely impact thousands of waterbirds that stop over on Manila Bay to feed and roost on its coastlines, mudflats and mangroves.

## 16 waterbird species

At least 16 waterbird species congregate on the bay during midwinter months, according to the WBCP, and at least 12 of the species, including the endangered Far Eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*), vulnerable Chinese egret (*Egretta eulophotes*) and near threatened bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), are



**VULNERABLE** Environmentalists have warned against coastal development projects that could disrupt the habitat and food source of migratory birds passing over Manila Bay, like this flock spotted off Freedom Island in Parañaque City in April last year. —JOAN BONDOC

considered of international importance because of their decreasing population.

In its most recent Asian Waterbird Census earlier this month, the WBCP observed a record number of black-faced spoonbills (*Platalea minor*). The bird is listed as endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

A total of 24 spoonbills were seen feeding and resting along the tidal flats and mangrove areas in Barangay Talipit in Bulakan, Bulacan—just "in the backyard" of the proposed international airport, Cinco said.

Before its last sighting in 2019 in Sasmuan, Pampanga province, the rare bird had not been seen for over a century on Manila Bay.

## Bioindicator

"Birds are the No. 1 bioindicator, meaning if you have birds present, you have clean water, clean air and basic food," Cinco said. "What is good for the birds are good for the people ... Why ruin a perfectly good environment?"

The Philippines is part of the flight path of some 50 mil-

lion birds that take the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, which stretches from Russia and Alaska at the northern end, to Australia and New Zealand at the southern end.

The Philippines is a stop-over for at least 13.5 million migratory birds, feeding before continuing their long-haul flights over 22 countries.

## Impact on fish stocks

Environmentalists have also expressed concern over the effect of reclamation projects on fish stocks in Manila Bay.

Though the bay is heavily polluted, many municipal fishermen still rely on it for their livelihood, with sardines as their main catch.

"[Since] they will be disturbed, the concentration of fish eggs and larvae in the bay will be gone," said Elsa Furio, senior research specialist at the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute of the Department of Agriculture.

"They might transfer to other areas but that will take time. Some of them might be gone forever," she said. INQ





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### NHA earns UNTV semis return

National Housing Authority booked a return trip to the semis with a thrilling 77-74 win over the Philippine International Trading Corporation last week in the 8th UNTV Cup at the Paco Arena in Manila.

Antonio Lustestica once again shone brightest for the Benneth Palad-mentored NHA Builders by firing 18 points apart posting three rebounds and a steal.

NHA's win in the annual tournament for public servants assured itself of the No. 3 seed-

ing no matter what happens in its last match in the quarterfinal round against the Department of Agriculture Food Masters on Sunday also at the Paco Arena.

The win likewise arranged for themselves a semis date with the No. 2 Department of Environment and Natural Resources Warriors.

The fourth and last semifinalist will be known on Sunday as the Food Masters made the race for the last semis berth doubly exciting with a surprising 71-68 victory over the two-time champions Judiciary Magis.

The Poch Junio-mentored Food Masters played minus several key players due to previous commitments but they still managed to prevail - thanks to the 23-point performance of Sherwin Silva.

Agriculture's victory forged a three-way tie for second to fourth places with PITC and Judiciary - all with similar 6-5 records.

The fourth semifinalist will face top seed and defending champion Armed Forces of the Philippines in the other semis pairing - also a best-of-three affair.



## All set for Takbo Para sa Kalikasan

A SERIES of fun runs is slated at the CCP Complex ground in Pasay City that not only promotes wellness but also raise awareness of protecting the environment.

This is the mission of Takbo Para sa Kalikasan 2020, a four-race event organized by the Green Media Events Company.

According to Green Media Events managing director Jenny Lumba, this year's Takbo Para sa Kalikasan is composed of fun runs representing the four elements — Fire Run on May 31, Water Run on July 19, Air Run on Sept. 20 and Earth Run on Nov. 22.

"This is our own little way of helping promote a clean environment and keep it safe from any undesirable factors," said Lumba during the 52nd "Usapang Sports" by the Tabloids Organization in Philippine Cities (TOPS) at the National Press Club in Intramuros, Manila.

To kick off the Kalikasan fun runs, Green Media Events will also support the staging of the Pride Run for the LGBT community on Feb. 16 at the CCP Complex in Pasay City.

"Tuloy-tuloy na po ito kaya ina-anyayahan namin hindi lang ang mga regular running enthusiasts kundi pati na ang mga kaibigan nating nagmamalasakit

sa ating kalikasan," added Lumba in the weekly public service program supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, National Press Club, PAGCOR and Community Basketball Association.

"Patuloy din po ang aming community outreach program tulad nung nakaraang taon na kung saan ang Green Media Events team kasama ang ilang volunteers ay namahagi ng groceries at medicines sa Charity Home of Joy for the Sick Children, pati na sa mga naapektuhan ng pagputok ng Taal Volcano."

Fritz Labastida, who accompanied Lumba in the weekly sports forum, urged everybody to participate in the 3K, 5K, 10K and 16K events not only to keep themselves physically fit but also to meet new friends who share the same advocacy.

Labastida also urged participants to bring their own reusable water container and avoid the use of plastic or paper cups during the fun run as their way of helping the environment.

"Huwag po kayo mag-atubiling lumahok para na rin manatiling malakas ang pangangatawan pati na ang kalusugan," said Labastida, who also earned monicker "Barefoot Diva" in the running community.