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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Only 25% of LGUs have landfills

BY JORDEENE B. LAGARE

MORE sanitary landfills are needed to cater to the increasing volume of waste generated in the Philippines, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official said on Tuesday.

At a Senate hearing on waste-to-energy (WTE) and waste management, DENR Assistant Secretary Jesus Enrico Moises Salazar said waste generation across the country was projected to surge to 21,844,080 tons by 2021 from 21,016,523 tons the previous year.

In Metro Manila alone, waste

generation is estimated to increase to 3,527,484 tons annually from the current 3,406,662 tons.

"We now have about 186 sanitary landfills servicing about 407 local government units (LGUs)," Salazar said, adding that the number represents only 25 percent of the total number of LGUs that

need sanitary landfills.

The DENR made the annual projection based on the country's population growth.

"We are projecting that the landfills will be filled up and then later on we will have to find other areas where we can establish these landfills for the LGUs to have some disposal areas," Salazar said in a chance interview after the hearing.

At present, some 331 illegal dumps are in operation despite several closures made by the department.

The DENR official said site selection for potential sanitary landfills should not affect the environment and the surrounding areas where such

dumping facilities are operating.

Affordability to put up a sanitary landfill also hampers local governments from building waste disposal facilities.

According to Salazar, the agency is considering the development of WTE facilities as one of the alternative modes of garbage disposal since majority of LGUs are resorting to illegal dump.

When asked if WTE plants can take the place of a landfill, he told reporters "not exactly."

"It is very difficult to enforce the law. It is also very difficult for the LGUs to comply with the requirements. But we have seen this happen in other areas," Salazar

said, adding this initiative would require more effort on the part of the government and the private sector.

"But still we will have to advocate that or else we are slowly contributing to the degradation of our environment and, later on, we will be suffering the economic, social consequences," he added.

The Senate panel conducted the hearing to tackle several proposed legislation to adopt WTE facilities for the treatment and disposal of solid waste.

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, who heads the Senate energy committee, filed Senate Bill (SB) 363 or the "Waste-to-Energy Act" (WTE Act)

that seeks to provide a framework for the entire value chain of WTE facilities, and, in turn, ensure the uninterrupted supply of waste as feedstock.

Sen. Francis Tolentino filed SB 401 or the "Waste to Energy Act of 2019, which seeks to establish guidelines for the use of WTE technology to reduce solid waste and increase energy generation.

Tolentino also filed SB 1011 or the "LGU Waste Management Act of 2019," which intends to amend Republic Act 7160, or the "Local Government Code of 1991," to strengthen the power of LGUs in waste management.

New technology to address garbage disposal problem

BY JED MACAPAGAL

SENATE committee on energy chairman Sherwin Gatchalian proposes the passage of a law that will establish the framework on waste-to-energy (WTE) technology and facilities that will deal with the country's worsening problem on garbage disposal.

Gatchalian in a statement said the absence of a WTE law discourages investors on the technology since pioneers in the country have either faced disputes with local government units or merited violations from other government agencies.

Gatchalian's Senate Bill No. 363 seeks to provide a framework for the entire value chain of WTE facilities to ensure the uninterrupted supply of waste as feedstock.

He said the law will encourage the development of new technologies in the treatment and disposal of solid waste while providing much needed power.

Citing a report from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Gatchalian said only 30 percent of barangays nationwide or 12,614 out of 42,045 are practicing segregation which effectively



Garbage woes. WTE facilities will treat and dispose solid waste as feedstock for fuel.

fails the goal to reduce, reuse and recycle.

The lawmaker said there are also 331 illegal dumpsites still operational in the country which may be solved by the adoption of WTE facilities in the treatment and disposal of solid waste.

Gatchalian pressed the DENR, Department of Energy

and the Department of Science and technology to come up with their own collaborative study to look at the capacity, potential for energy and environmental concerns that will be involved for such policy.

Gatchalian said based on the National Solid Waste Management Commission's projection of yearly

waste generation that the country will produce trash worth 20.51 metric tons in 2030 from the current 16.63 MT.

He added that it is already crucial for the country to have its own WTE law especially that other Asean nations such as Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia have already implemented theirs.



MASAlamin ni Ed Cordevilla

16TH GAWAD TANGLAW BEST
NEWSPAPER OPINION COLUMNIST

MALAKING palaisipan sa gobyerno at lokal na mga opisyal kung paano makatotohanang masolusyunan ang gabundok na suliranin sa basura.

Mayroong bagong teknolohiya sa bansa ngayon na mula sa Japan na ang disenyo ay bigyang solusyon ang suliraning ito.

Naging saksi nga tayo, mga kamasa, sa isang teknolohiyang pam-bihira at tunay na makakalikasan. Naniniwala nga ang inyong lingkod na ito na ang matagal nang hinihintay ng bansa tungo sa mas feasible na sistema ukol sa waste management.

Sa Filipinas kasi ay may batas na umiiral, ang Republic Act 9003 o ang 'Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000', kung saan minamanduhan ang mga local government unit na magkaroon ng kani-kanilang mga engineered sanitary landfill. Ngunit imbes na masunod ito ay naglipana ang mga dumpsite na napakabaho at pinagmumulan ng mga iba't ibang uri ng sakit, mula sa respiratory disease hanggang sa sakit sa balat.

Ang iba naman ay nauwi sa pagsusunog ng

mga basura. Ang parehong practice na ito ay ipinagbabawal sa ilalim ng R.A. 9003. Bakit ba parang napakahirap sundin ang nasabing batas? Una po ay napakamahal na mag-construct ng isang tunay na engineered sanitary landfill, ikalawa ay napakamahal ding imantive niyan.

Ang masaklap pa nito, ang mga basurang nanggagaling sa mga ospital na may dalang sari-saring sakit ay karaniwang ibinabaon na lamang sa lupa. Ito ay mapanganib at nagbabadya pang maaaring may sumabog na epidemya sa ating mga komunidad dahil sa mapanganib na practice na iyan.

Kasama si Quezon City Councilor Hero Clarence M. Bautista na siyang chairman ng Sangguniang Panglungsod Committee on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, Barangay Commonwealth Chairman Manny Co, mga kinatawan ng Nissho Global Solutions Incorporated at mga eksperto mula sa bansang Japan, ay nasaksihan natin kung paanong ang tone-toneladang basura ay naging 250 gramong abo na lamang nang wala man lamang usok.

BREAKTHROUGH SA WASTE MANAGEMENT

Ang mala-milagrosong makinarya ay tinatawag na Organic Magnetic Pyrolysis Energy Conversion Equipment na mula sa bansang Hapon. Ang nasabing equipment ay tumutulong sa mas epektibo at murang pag-dispose ng residual waste na mula sa mga tahanan, factory, fast-food chain, restawran at mga ospital. Tumutulong din ang nasabing equipment sa pagprotekta sa kapaligiran at upang mapababa ang green house gases sa bansa.

Sa pamamagitan ng

breakthrough technology na ito sa waste management, ang lahat ng LGUs sa buong bansa ay mas reyalistiko nang makasunod sa R.A. 9003. Ang isa pang advantage nito, kung ang isang landfill ay nangangailangan ng ekta-ektaryang lupain para maging bagsakan ng basura, ang nasabing equipment ay mangangailangan lamang nang wala pa sa 60 square meter para paglagakan nito.

Matagumpay ang isinagawang test-run na ito sa Barangay Common-

wealth, at nakita natin ang tuwa kina Councilor Bautista at Chairman Co dahil natagpuan na ang mahusay na katuwang para sa waste management hindi lamang para sa siyudad ng Quezon kundi para sa buong bansa, isang system at teknolohiya na hindi nakasisira sa kapaligiran at kalikasan, bagkus ay nakafilinis at nakatutulong upang gawin at mapanatiling ligtas ang mga ito para sa maiging kalusugan ng mga mamamayan.



New issue raised – water ‘environmental’ fees

President Duterte was speaking at the oath-taking of new government officials in Malacañang last Thursday, when he turned anew to the problem of Metro Manila’s water services. The two water concessionaires, he said, have been collecting an “environmental fee” since 1997, for which they were supposed to build waste treatment plants to which all Metro Manila households would be connected through sewer lines.

“It’s in your bill if you care to look at it,” he told the audience. Where did that money go? he asked. It was the latest development since the President went after the concessionaires after they sued the Philippine government in a case filed in an arbitration court in Singapore for huge losses due to the government’s rejection of water rate increases from 2013 to 2017.

The matter of Manila Bay’s pollution – which the two firms were supposed to help solve by setting up waste treatment plants – became a legal issue when a group calling itself “Concerned Residents of Manila Bay” filed a complaint with the Regional Trial Court in Imus, Cavite, asking the government agencies concerned to clean up, restore, preserve, and protect the bay.

The RTC decision of 2002 was affirmed by the Court of Appeals in 2005 and by the Supreme Court in 2008. The high court ordered a number of government agencies – among them, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Department

of Interior and Local Government (DILG) — to carry out the cleanup order. The court said a major source of the pollution appeared to be shanties and establishments without septic tanks discharging their wastes into the rivers flowing into the bay.

In 2009, the DENR fined the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the two private water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water for failing to connect sewage lines in subdivisions and commercial buildings and other establishments to a sewage system. In 2011, the court affirmed the DENR decision that the concessionaires, along with the MWSS, were liable to a total of P921 million in penalty. The two firms appealed the decision.

Last October, 2019, partylist Rep. Lito Atienza, a former mayor of Manila and secretary of the DENR, said the water companies should have set up water treatment facilities to which all households and establishments in their areas should be connected. They pledged 22 years ago to set up the treatment plants, he said, but have only been sending sewer tanks to households requesting to empty their septic tanks.

Sometime ago, the two concessionaires announced projects they have already launched, but these obviously have been below government expectations. President Duterte has now raised the matter of “environmental fees” they have been collecting all these years. They should now update their reports on these projects along with their accounting of the fees they have collected for them.



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Maynilad spending P41 B for wastewater services

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

West zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. has earmarked P41 billion to improve and expand its wastewater services.

Maynilad said part of the amount was used to construct 19 new wastewater treatment facilities and upgrade three existing ones since the company's re-privatization in 2007.

The budget will also be used to purchase 89 new vacuum trucks for septic tank cleaning, install 180 kilometers of new sewer lines, and maintain the sewerage system, among others.

A portion of the money would also go to the construction of four additional sewage treatment plants (STP) in Valenzuela, Las Piñas, and Tunasan and Cupang in Muntinlupa.

Maynilad was able to expand sewerage services to some two million people by the end of 2019, up from only around 600,000 in 1997 when MWSS operations were first privatized.

"Maynilad only got out of corporate rehabilitation in 2008, so we had just 11 years to work on expanding wastewater services. Despite this, we managed to build new wastewater facilities that now prevent untreated effluents from polluting our waterways," Maynilad president and chief executive officer Ramoncito Fernandez said.

Among Maynilad's recently completed STPs are those in Pasay and Parañaque, bringing the total combined sewage treatment capacity of its 22 wastewater facilities to 664,000 cubic meters of wastewater per day.

Maynilad is set to spend P200 billion more to expand its wastewater infrastructure until 100 percent sewerage coverage in the west zone is attained by 2037.

It is the largest private water concessionaire in the country in terms of customer base. It serves the areas of Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Malabon, and certain portions of Manila, Quezon City, Makati and Cavite.



Maynilad invests P41 billion in west zone to expand wastewater services

MAYNILAD Water Services, Inc. has spent more than P41 billion to improve and expand its wastewater services since the government privatized the operation of Metro Manila's water services in 1997, the west zone concessionaire said on Tuesday.

"Maynilad only got out of corporate rehabilitation in 2008, so we had just 11 years to work on expanding wastewater services. Despite this, we have managed to build new wastewater facilities that now prevent untreated effluents from polluting our waterways. This is where all the bill payments of our customers go," said Ramoncito S. Fernandez, Maynilad president and chief executive officer, said in a statement.

It said the P41-billion investment was used to build 19 new wastewater treatment facilities and upgrade of three existing ones, buy 89 new vacuum trucks for septic tank cleaning, and install 180 kilometers of new sewer lines, and maintenance of the sewerage system, among others.

It said the capital spending includes the construction of four additional sewage treatment plants

(STPs) that are currently being built in Valenzuela, Las Piñas, and Tunasan and Cupang in Muntinlupa.

With the investment, Maynilad said it had expanded its sewerage services to about 2 million people by end-2019, from only around 600,000 in 1997 when the operations of state-led Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) were first privatized.

"Among Maynilad's recently completed STPs are those in Pasay and Parañaque, bringing the total combined sewage treatment capacity of its 22 wastewater facilities to 664,000 cubic meters of wastewater per day," the company said.

Maynilad said it allocated P200 billion for the continued expansion of the wastewater infrastructure until 100% sewerage coverage in its service area is attained by 2037.

"This amount includes the P1.1 billion committed cost to rehabilitate five *esteros* in Manila that drain out to Manila Bay. Meanwhile, areas that are not yet connected to Maynilad's sewerage system are

provided septic tank cleaning services," it said.

Maynilad, a concessionaire of the MWSS, serves the cities of Manila, except portions of San Andres and Sta. Ana. It also covers Quezon City west of San Juan River, West Avenue, EDSA, Congressional, Mindanao Avenue, the northern part starting from the districts of the Holy Spirit and Batasan Hills.

Down south, it serves Makati west of South Super Highway, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon all in Metro Manila; and the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus, and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario, all in Cavite province.

Metro Pacific Investments Corp., which has majority stake in Maynilad, is one of three Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Philex Mining Corp. and PLDT Inc. Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — VVS



P41B spent for west zone's wastewater facilities

WEST zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. said it has poured in over P41 billion to improve and expand wastewater services since the privatization of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's operations in 1997.

The company said the amount funded the construction of at least 19 new wastewater treatment facilities and the upgrade of three existing ones, among other improvements.

The amount was also used to purchase 89 new vacuum trucks for septic tank cleaning, installation of 180 kilometers of new

sewer lines and maintenance of the sewerage system, apart from the building of four additional sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Valenzuela, Las Piñas, and Tunasan and Cupang in Muntinlupa that are currently in development.

The company is set to spend P200 billion more to continue the expansion of the wastewater infrastructure until 100 percent sewerage coverage in the west zone is attained by 2037, including the commitment to rehabilitate five esteros in Manila that drain out to Manila Bay.

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porate rehabilitation in 2008, so we had just 11 years to work on expanding wastewater services. Despite this, we have managed to build new wastewater facilities that now prevent untreated effluents from polluting our waterways. This is where all the bill payments of our customers go," Ramoncito Fernandez, Maynilad president and chief executive officer, said in a statement.

Among the company's recently completed STPs are in Pasay and Parañaque, bringing the total combined sewage treatment capacity of its 22 wastewater facilities to

664,000 cubic meters of wastewater per day.

As of end-2019, it caters sewerage services to some 2 million people, up from only around 600,000 people served with sewerage services in 1997.

Maynilad is the largest private water concessionaire in the Philippines in terms of customer base. It covers Manila, Quezon City, Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon; the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario that are all in Cavite.



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In 2009, the DENR fined the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the two private water concessionaires, Maynilad and Manila Water, for failing to connect sewage lines in subdivisions and commercial buildings and other establishments to a sewage system. In 2011, the court affirmed the DENR decision that the concessionaires, along with the MWSS, were liable to a total of ₱921 million in penalty. The two firms appealed the decision.

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Sometime ago, the two concessionaires announced projects they have already launched, but these obviously have been below government expectations. President Duterte has now raised the matter of "environmental fees" they have been collecting all these years. They should now update their reports on these projects along with their accounting of the fees they have collected for them.



EDITORIAL

Bagong isyu - water environmental fees

NAGSASALITA si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa panunumpa ng mga bagong opisyal ng gobyerno sa Malacañang nitong Huwebes, nang muli niyang balikan ang problema ng mga serbisyo sa tubig sa Metro Manila.

Ang dalawang water concessionaires, aniya, ay nangongolekta ng "environmental fee" mula pa noong 1997 para sa mga planong pagtatayo ng waste treatment kung saan ikokonekta ang lahat ng kabahayan sa Metro Manila sa pamamagitan ng sewer lines o mga linya ng alkantariya.

"It's in your bill if you care to look at it," sinabi niya sa madla. Saan napunta ang pera? tanong niya. Ito ang pinakahuling kaganapan mula nang tugisin ng Pangulo ng concessionaires matapos nilang isunto ang gobyerno ng Pilipinas sa isang kaso na isinampa sa isang arbitration court sa Singapore dahil sa malaking pagkalugi nito bunsod ng pagbasura ng gobyerno sa water rate increase para sa taong 2013 hanggang 2017.

Ang usapin ng polusyon sa Manila Bay - na kung saan ang dalawang kumpanya ay dapat makatulong sa paglutas sa pamamagitan ng pagtatayo ng mga planta ng waste treatment - ay naging isang ligal na isyu nang ang isang grupo na nagpapakilalang "Concerned Residents of Manila Bay" ay nagsampa ng reklamo sa Regional Trial Court sa Imus, Cavite, na humiling sa mga kinauukulang ahensya ng gobyerno na linisin, ibalik sa dati, ipreserba, at protektahan ang look.

Ang desisyon ng RTC noong 2002 ay napatunayan ng Court of Appeals noong 2005 at ng Korte Suprema noong 2008.

Inutusan ng mataas na korte ang ilang mga ahensya ng gobyerno - kabilang dito ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the Department of Health (DOH), at ang Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) - na ipatupad ang utos ng paglilinis. Sinabi ng korte na isang pangunahing pinagmumulan ng polusyon ay ang mga barung-barong at mga establisimiyento na walang septic tanks na naglalabas ng kanilang mga basura sa mga ilog na dumadaloy sa look.

Noong 2009, pinagmula ng DENR ang Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) at ang dalawang pribadong water concessionaires na Maynilad at Manila Water para sa hindi pagkonekta ang mga linya ng dumi sa alkantariya sa mga subdivision at mga gusaling komersyal at iba pang mga establisimiyento sa isang sewage system. Noong 2011, pinagtibay ng korte ang desisyon ng DENR na ang concessionaires, kasama ang MWSS, ay may pananagutan sa halagang P921 milyon na parusa. Iniapela ng dalawang kumpanya ang desisyon.

Nitong Oktubre, 2019, sinabi ni partylist Rep. Lito Atienza, dating alkalde ng Maynila at kalihim ng DENR, na ang mga kumpanya ng tubig ay dapat na nagtayo ng mga pasilidad para sa paggamot ng tubig na kung saan ang lahat ng mga kabahayan at establisimiyento sa kanilang mga lugar ay dapat na konektado. Nangako sila may 22 taon na ang nakakaraan na magtatayo ng treatment plants, aniya, ngunit nagpadala lamang ng mga tanke ng alkantariya sa mga kabahayan na humihiling na alisin ang laman ng kanilang septic tank.

Minsan pa, ipinahayag ng dalawang concessionaires ang mga proyekto na kanila nang nailunsad, ngunit ang mga ito ay malina w naman na hindi naabot ang inaasahan ng gobyerno.

Binabanggit ngayon ni Pangulong Duterte ang usapin ng "environmental fees" na maraming taon na nilang kinokolekta.

Dapat nila ngayong i-update ang kanilang mga ulat sa mga proyektong ito kasama ang kanilang accounting ng mga bayarin na kanilang nakolekta para sa kanila.



MENRO Sta. Maria mahigpit kontra lahat ng uri ng polusyon

HINDI matatawaran ang ginagawang paglilingkod ng tanggapan ng Municipal Environment and Natural Resources (MENRO) sa bayan ng Sta. Maria, sa lalawigan ng Bulacan.

Sapamunon ni Rommel Enriquez, agarang umaak-siyon ang MENRO Sta. Maria sa mga karaingan ng mga mamamayan na may kinalaman sa kapaligiran higit sa isyu ng polusyon.

Isa sa malaking pagbabagong inihatid ng MENRO ang ginawang paglilinis sa

ilog at tabing ilog ng Sta. Maria.

Kung dati ay larawan ng maruming kapaligiran, ang Sta. Maria riverbanks ay kaaya-aya nang pagmasdan — malinis at maging ang tubig sa ilog na dati ay puro basura at water lily ay kulay luntian na ngayon.

Marami na rin umanong naipasarang establisimiyento ang MENRO Sta. Maria na lumalabag sa environmental laws.

Napatigil nila ang operasyon ng isang tunawan ng gulong na lubhang naka-

susulasok ang usok sa boundary ng Bgy. Pulong Buhangin at Bgy. Partida, sa Norzagaray.

Maging ang isang ulingan (charcoal) sa Sitio Pasong Kasay sa Bgy. San Vicente na malaon nang inirereklamo ng mga residente dahil sa mabahong amoy, ay naipasara na rin.

Isa pa umanong naipasara ng MENRO Sta. Maria ang layer/breeder farm sa Sitio Manggahan sa Bgy. Pulong Buhangin na inireklamo rin ng mga residente

dahil sa mga naglalakihang langaw mula rito.

Maging ang illegal quarrying sa Sta. Maria ay inaksiyonan ng kanilang tanggapan tulad ng pagpasara sa isang quarry site sa Bgy. San Gabriel.

Hindi rin umano sila nagpapabaya sa paghahakot ng basura sa mga barangay at ito ay araw-araw nilang isinasagawa.

Sa ngayon, patuloy ang monitoring ng MENRO Sta. Maria sa mga pabrika, establisimiyento, poultry, at piggery farms upang maiwasang pagmulan ng nakasusulasok na polusyon sa kapaligiran ng Sta. Maria.

(MICKA BAUTISTA)



DENR awards land titles

By Jonas Reyes

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – A total of 2,100 residential free patents or land titles will be distributed to qualified beneficiaries in Central Luzon by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office.

The distribution of these residential free patents is part of the "Handog Titulo" program by the national government, wherein it aims to push progress in non-urbanized areas while improving the economic productivity of the residents there.

"Bringing social justice in land titling is one of the priority thrusts of our government. Aside from improving the socio-economic conditions of the Filipino and enhancing agricultural productivity in rural areas, our program will likewise fuel progress in local communities," DENR Central Luzon Executive Director Paquito Moreno said.

Currently, the DENR has provided a total of 508 agricultural land titles that cover 548 hectares of farm land, while also providing 2,754 residential titles that cover more than 70 hectares of land to some 1,500 farmers and their families last year.

DENR's Patents and Deeds Division chief of licenses Ricky Hernandez said that since 2011, there are around 31,743 residential land titles covering 629 hectares that have already been distributed

in Central Luzon and benefitting over 158,000 residents.



6 charged for illegal firearms possession

By Elmer Recuerdo

TACLOBAN CITY — A case of illegal possession of firearms was filed against six suspected members of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) at the Tacloban City Prosecutor's Office on Monday.

The six activists were identified as Frenchie Mae Castro Cumpio, Marissa Cabaljao, an officer of People's Surge; Mira Legion of Bayan-Eastern Visayas; Marielle Domequil from the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines; Alexander Philip Abinguna from Katungod Sinirangan Bisayas-Karapatan and Rogelio "Jun" Berino of Samahan han Gudti nga Parauma (Association of Small Farmers).

The Armed Forces of the Philippines identified Cumpio as the alleged secretary of the Regional White Area Committee under the CPP-NPA's Eastern Visayas Regional Party Committee.

Except for Berino, the suspects are presently detained at the Palo Municipal Jail after their arrest during simultaneous raids

on two suspected safehouses early morning last Friday where firearms and explosives were allegedly found.

Cases for illegal possession of explosives were also filed against Cumpio, Domequil, Abinguna and Berino.

Lawyer Marlon Bosantog, legal counsel of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, came to observe in the filing of the cases against the suspects to make sure that due process is observed and that the rights of the suspects are not violated.

"We do not see the filing of this case as a triumph on the part of the government. It is heartbreaking to see these young people being charged of illegal possession of firearms and explosives," Bosantog said.

He disclosed that the case of illegal possession of firearms is bailable with a bond of up to P120,000 while illegal possession is non-bailable under the law.

"These are very grave charges, the illegal possession of explosives carries a penalty of life imprisonment while firearms from six to 20 years," he added.

The distribution of these residential free patents is part of the "Handog Titulo" program, wherein it aims to push progress in non-urbanized areas while improving the economic productivity of the residents there.

As such, the agency has awarded land officers and investigators in Central Luzon for the success of the "Handog Titulo" program. The agency said that they could not have achieved the 110 percent success without these hardworking individuals.

Aside from the individual awards, special citations were also given to DENR provincial offices.

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO)-Bulacan and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO)-Capas were named as the first field offices in the region to accomplish 100 percent their target under the residential free patent.

The DENR offices in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Pampanga were recognized for accomplishing more than 100 percent of their targets in titling government lands through special patents, while the provincial offices in Bataan, Zambales and Aurora were distinguished for exceeding their targets in the management and appraisal of foreshores and issuance of notice of bills and demand letters in their respective jurisdiction.



IMBESTIGADaVe

Dave M. Veridiano, E.E.

Rapist ng kabundukan sa lalawigan ng Rizal

KUNG hindi matitigil ang walang habas na pangagahasa sa mga birheng kagubatan sa lalawigan ng Rizal, napipiho ko na 'di na magtatagal ay muling mararamdaman ng mga taga kanugnog pook nito at sa buong Kalakhang Maynila ang lupit ng paghihiganti ni Inang Kalikasan.

Kasama ako sa isang grupo ng mga mamamahayag na personal na nasaksihan ang walang habas na paglapastangan - pagmimina

ng bato at buhangin o quarrying - sa dating luntiang kapaligiran, sa isang bahagi ng munisipalidad ng Rodriguez (mas kilala sa tawag na Montalban) sa may paanan ng Mount Pamutinan, isa sa paboritong "hiking place" sa lalawigan ng Rizal.

Sa loob lamang ng halos 10 buwan, ang isang dating bulubunduking lugar na nalalambungan ng makapal na puno ng manga na hitik sa bunga, ay nagmistulang isang malawak na disyerto na ginagapangan ng mga naglalakihang traktora, mga pambungkal na makina, at mga truck na gamit panghakot ng mga bato at buhangin na-mina.

Batay sa kuwento ng 'di makakibo na mga nakatira sa paligid ng paanan ng makasaysayang bundok ng Rizal, ang mga "rapist" ay pawang mga singkit na 'di marunong magsalita ng Tagalog, at ang palaging kasama nito na mga kaututang dila, ay ilang ganid na local officials at mga tauhan ng pambansang tanggapan ng pamahalaan na siyang dapat mangalaga sa ating kapaligiran.

Tampulan sa usapang narinig ko sa mga nakatira sa paligid ng "quarrying site" ay sobrang

malakas ang may-ari nito sa ilang mataas na official sa administrasyong kaya't 'di matinag-tinag kahit anong sumbong nila sa local government unit (LGU) at maging sa pamunuan ng pamahalaang parilalawigan ng Rizal.

Heto pa ang matindi - mukhang 'di pa nasisiyahan ang "singkit" na may-ari ng "quarrying site" - kasama ang maliit na team mula sa Philippine National Police (PNP) at Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), tinatakot ng mga ito ang mga original na nakatira sa paanan ng bundok upang magsilikas at iwan ang lugar. Isang macluming paraan upang mapalawak ang kanilang "quarrying operation" sa lugar at ipagpatuloy ang pag-rape sa kalikasan!

Nafatandaan ko pa, bagong pasok pa lamang ang administrasyong Duterte nang magkaroon ng malawakang pagbaha sa paligid ng Rizal, at kasama sa naperwisyo ng todo ay ang bayan ng Taytay at Marikina City. Inulan ng sumbong at reklamo ang Malacañang administrasyon hinggil sa naglipanang "quarrying site" sa lalawigan ng Rizal na labis na ikinabahala ni Pangulong Duterte kaya't agad na

nag-utos na ipasara ang mga ito.

Sumugod pa nga sa lugar ng mga nasalanta si Senator Bong Go na noo'y pangunahing opisyal sa Palasyo, at personal na pinangunahan ang pagpapatigil sa mga "quarrying operation" na agad namang natigil.

Ngunit 'di naman nagtagal ay muling nabuksan ang mga "quarrying site" na ito, mas aktibo ang mga bagong operator at ngayon nga ay mukhang mas malala pa ang mga pinaggagagawa kumpara sa mga dating operator nito!

Anyare kaya sa nagbabagang utos mula sa Palasyo - na agad din namang ipinatupad noon ng Calabarzon DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau - na ipatigil ang lahat ng operasyon sa lugar ng mga "quarrying site" sa buong lalawigan ng Rizal.

Magkano kayang dahilan ang sanhi ng biglang pagpapatuloy ng operasyon nito, na ngayon nga ay mabilis pang lumalawak ang mga lugar na bulubunduking kanilang pinapatag?

Mag-text at tumawag sa Globe: 09369953459 o mag-email sa: daveridiano@yahoo.com



'5K' campaign INDUSTRIYA NG KAWAYAN SUPORTADO NG GOBYERNO AT PRIBADONG SEKTOR

NAGTIPON-TIPON ang iba't ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno at pribadong sektor para suportahan ang industriya ng kawayan sa isang okasyon ng Philippine Bamboo Indus-

try Development Council meeting (PBDIC) kamakailan.

Bilang chairman ng Bamboo Industry Council, ini-report ni Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

Secretary Ramon Lopez na iba't ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno tulad ng Departments of Agriculture, Environment, Local Government, at Trade ay nagkakaisa.



REHABILITATION EFFORTS

FRESH AID BOOSTS REBUILDING OF QUAKE-HIT DAVAO DEL SUR

MAGSAYSAY, DAVAO DEL SUR—More aid trickled into Davao del Sur for rebuilding its earthquake-hit communities, raising hopes among displaced families that they could eventually start a new life.

Davao del Sur's towns are among the areas hardest hit by the series of powerful earthquakes in October, with damage increasing with another powerful temblor in December.

Records from disaster response agencies showed that as of the end of 2019, close to 3,000 houses were destroyed and more than 11,000 were damaged by the quakes in the province. Many families are still staying in temporary shelters, awaiting the building of their new houses. The town requires a total of 15 relocation sites.

Land purchase

Recently, Rotary Club International purchased a 2.1-hectare land at Sitio Macabulos in Barangay San Miguel here as site for the new houses of 61 displaced families.

Mayor Arthur Davin said the



DAMAGE The 6.5-magnitude earthquake that hit Davao del Sur province last year destroyed homes and buildings in Digos City. —BONG SARMIENTO

construction of the houses in San Miguel would start this month.

The Philippine Red Cross had built four toilets for the displaced families in San Miguel. By the time the families leave, the facilities will be turned over to the San Miguel Elementary School.

Tools

Davin said the Philippine Army had also pledged to purchase the 4-ha land as relocation site of the evacuees from

Barangay Upper Bala. A large portion of the village has been assessed as a no-build zone because of the threats of landslides and the large cracks on the ground due to the quakes. The Magsaysay local government's disaster response funds were further boosted by donations of P2.7 million from the Makati City government and P300,000 from Kananga town in Leyte province.

For the other towns, the Mindanao Development Au-

thority (MinDA) has provided carpentry and other tools so these can be used by evacuees in building their new homes.

MinDA chair Emmanuel Piñol said the tools were donated by Don Bosco Foundation for Sustainable Development through the support of Philippine Ambassador to Indonesia Leehiong Wee and the Philippine Business Council in Indonesia.

Evacuees from the towns of Padada, Magsaysay, Kiblawan, Bansalan and Matanao in Davao del Sur, and M'lang, Tulunan and Makilala in Cotabato province received welding machines, rotary drills, marble cutters and planers, among others. These will be used in repairing public buildings, government facilities and damaged homes.

Piñol said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources approved the turn-over to quake-hit towns of some 20,000 board feet of lumber recovered by its personnel from antilogging operations so these could be used in rebuilding efforts. —ELDIE S. AGUIRRE AND ORLANDO B. DINOY INQ



Repatriation ng mga Pinoy ipagpapatuloy

ALERT LEVEL 4 SA IRAQ NAKATAAS PA RIN

SA KABILA na tila humupa sa ngayon ang tensiyon sa pagitan ng Estados Unidos at Iran, hindi pa rin iniaalis ng pamahalaan ang Alert Level 4 sa Iraq at handa itong ipagpapatuloy ang pagpapauwi sa mga Filipinong nandoon.

Ito ang inihayag ni Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, na siyang itinalaga ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte bilang 'special envoy' to Middle East upang pamunuan ang binuong task force na silang magpapatupad sa 'repatriation' ng mga Pinoy na nasa Iraq.

Sa kanyang pagharap kahapon sa pagdinig ng House Committee on Overseas Workers Af-

fairs, na pinamumunuan ni Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) partylist Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza, iniulat din ni Cimatu na mas marami pa ring mga kababayan natin ang nagpasyang manatili sa Iraq sa kabila ng alok ng gobyerno na libreng pagpapauwi sa kanila sa bansa.

Ayon sa kalihim, sa kabuuang, nasa 36 Filipinos lamang ang napapayag nilang umuwi rito, mula sa higit sa 1,000 na mga kababayan nating nasa Iraq, na ang karamihan ay 'undocumented'.

Giit ni Cimatu, mahirap basahin ang maaari sunod na mangyayari sa girian ng United States of America (USA) at Iran,

partikular kung sisiklab muli ang madugong labanan ng dalawang panig sa bahagi ng Iraq.

Bunsod nito, ay hindi pa rin ibinababa ng gobyerno ng Filipinas ang itinaas nitong Alert Level 4, na may katumbas na direktibang sapilitang pagpapauwi ng mga Filipino upang hindi maipit o maging 'collateral damage' kapag tuluyang mauwi sa 'all-out war' ang US-Iran conflict.

Dagdag ni Cimatu, habang payapa ngayon ang sitwasyon sa nasabing Arab nation, mas mainam na isakatuparan ang Pinoy repatriations habang wala pang labanan na nagaganap.

**ROMER R.
BUTUYAN**



ILANG kembot na lang, Valentine's Day na.

Dito naaalala ng ating UZI ang masasayang kwento sa pag-ibig.

Tatlong araw pa lang bago ang araw na ito ng mga puso, nagmamahal na ang mga bulaklak.

Nagdodoble, nagtriple ang presyo hanggang sa biglang babagsak ang presyo matapos ang Valentine's Day mismo.

Para sa mga kumukulo ang dugo kay Manay, dina-dive ng hubby o boypren o manliligaw ang mahal na bulaklak.

Mag-smile lang si Manay habang tinatanggap ang bulaklak, very happy na si Manoy at talo pa ang toro sa sigla.

PALASIMBA, PALASAMBA

May pananampalataya na ang pagpapakita ng public display of faith ay sa pamamagitan ng pagsisimba o pagsasamba.

Panahon naman ng public display of affection ang Valentine's Day.

Kaya naman marami ang nagsisimba o nagsasamba.

At nagiging happy together ang mga gumagawa nito, lalo na ang mga nanliligaw o nagpapaligaw pa lamang na ang nililigawan o nagpapaligaw ay kumakabog din ang dibdib.

Eh ano kung magkakaiba ang kanilang dinadalang relihiyon o pananampalataya?

Love conquers all, 'ika nga.

"Yung iba pa nga, tinatawid ang mga dagat o kabundukan para lang makapiling nila kahit saglit sa simbahan o church ang kanilang sinisinta.

Itong pagsisimba at pagsasamba ay mahalaga sa kanila dahil dito rin makulay at makahulugan ang ending kung sakali.

"Di ba mas gusto ng marami ang makasal sa simbahan o church sa basbas ng pari o pastor o imam kaysa kina mayor at judge?

Dahil nga sa paninilawala nila na ang pinagsama ng Diyos ay hindi pwedeng paghiwalayin ng tao.

...Kung walang umiiral na batas sa diborsyo, annulment at separation.

PA-PARTY

Ang dami rin ang nagdaraos ng mga party.

Sa eskwela, sa mga patio ng simbahan, sa mga barangay playground, sa mga restoran



ULTIMATUM

Ni BENNY ANTIPORDA

VALENTINE'S DAY: KISSES, HOLDING HANDS BAWAL?

at marami pang iba.

Ang mga patakaran sa sounds na hanggang alas-10 o alas-12 ng gabi lang, wala iyon.

Pwera lang kung pangawang mga sintunado na ang kumakanta at nakainom na ang mga ito.

Uso ang exchanging partners o exclusive partners sa mga sayawan.

Katakot-takot na besobeso at holding hands ang nagaganap.

"Yung iba, walwal dito, walwal doon.

Meron ding pa-mass wedding.

KAKAIBA SA LAHAT

Ang pinakakaiba sa lahat, punuan ang mga hotel at motel.

Kung gusto mong idate si Manang o Manong sa mga lugar na ito, kailangan mong mag-online para sa reservation.

Kung hindi, pagdating mo roon, kailangan mong pumila at maghintay ng bakanteng kwarto.

"Yung iba, napupumada, kaya sa Luneta o sa Baywalk sa Manila at katulad ng mga ito sa mga lalawigan na lang nagpapalipas ng sweet moments ang mga tumitibok ang puso o kinakabog ang dibdib.

Makilos din ang mga motorsiklo, motorcycle taxi, taxi at FX na naghahatid o sumusundo.

Sa rami ng mga ito, ang mga magkakapitbahay na nagdi-date at mga tsuper ng mga motorcycle taxi, taxi at FX ay nagkakabulagaan.

Nagdededmahang lang.

Kasunod na lang nito ang mga tsismis na laman ng mga barangay hanggang sa umabot ang mga tsismis sa ibang bansa na may mga apektadong overseas Filipino worker kahit walang katoohanang ang tsismis.

Pero marami naman talaga ang walang problema at gusto lang mabago at maging meaningful ang pagsasama.

Kung minsan, kasama ang mga pamilya.

NCOV NASA TABI-TABI

Ngayon naman, ang daming ipinagbabawal o tinatanggihan dahil sa pagdating ng virus na may corona, si Novel Corona

Virus.

Unang ipinagbabawal ng mga may-ari ng mga punerarya ang pagtanggap ng kanilang mga tauhan sa mga namatay sa NCOV.

Bawal ang pagsundo sa bangkay, pagpapalamay at pagpapalibing.

Maging ang mga nag-aagawan ng mga naghihingalo pa lang sa ospital ay umiwas o tumatangi rin sa mga kasong dulot ng NCOV kahit may mga komisyon sila sa mga punerarya.

Ewan lang natin sa mga iskalawag na pulis na pinagkokomisyonan nang todo ang mga namatay sa mga kasong kriminal.

Bawal din ang mga pa-party, lalo na sa parte ng mga eskwelang sakop ng Department of Education.

Bawal na ring bumiyahe ang mga motorcycle taxi, taxi, FX at iba pang pampasahero kung walang face mask ang mga tsuper at konduktor.

Bawal na rin ang walang sanitizer sa mga terminal ng mga pampublikong sasakyan. May multa pang P5,000 ang sinomang tsuper na walang face mask.

Bawal na rin ang besobeso at hugging sa pagitan ng mga pari, pastor at iba pa at holding hands kahit nagdarasal sila ng Ama Namin at naghahayag ng Peace Be With You.

VALENTINO, VALENTINA

Ang tanong ngayon: bawal din ba ang besobeso, holding hands at hugs and kisses sa mga magba-Valentino at Valentina?

Mapupwersa ba silang magsuot ng face mask?

Kung bawal ang mga nasabing public display of affection at hindi pagsusuot ng face mask, may susunod o makikinig naman kaya?

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