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# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## PH prepares to turn over leadership of migratory species conservation group

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Philippines is about to end its three-year presidency of the 12th Conference of Parties (COP 12) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) on an upbeat note.

"As the Philippines ends its term, we take pride that we have successfully strengthened both international and regional cooperation for greater protection of wildlife migratory species and their habitats," Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

The country will be turning over the COP presidency to India at the opening of the COP 13 on February 17 in Gandhinagar, India.

Philippine Ambassador to India Ramon Bagatsing Jr. will be reporting the achievements of the Philippines to the CMS COP13.

Since assuming the COP 12 presidency in 2017, the Philippines—through DENR and its Biodiversity Management Bureau and together with the CMS Secretariat—had been hosting events during international conferences promoting bet-

ter protection of migratory species pursuant to the objectives of the Convention.

CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention, is the only global environmental treaty established exclusively for the conservation and management of terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It has been adopted by 124 countries under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Cimatu said that during its term as COP president, the Philippines had successfully promoted the CMS agenda in Southeast Asia.

"The integration of CMS resolutions in the promotion of marine protected areas in the ASEAN region and the management of ASEAN Heritage Parks, including sites relevant to migratory species, are key achievements we share with CMS parties," he pointed out.

He noted that the country also effectively integrated the CMS objectives into the framework of Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), a regional cooperation of six countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and

the Philippines—with shared jurisdiction over the most diverse marine eco-region in the world.

According to the DENR chief, the CMS resolutions on the protection of marine turtles, sharks, rays and marine mammals are now put into action with the implementation of the CTI Regional Conservation Action Plan.

"We will soon realize our vision of connectivity conservation once the Marine Turtle Protected Area Network (MTPAN) is established. This will connect the habitats of marine turtles across Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," Cimatu said.

Cimatu noted that the Philippines, through its Protected Area System, manages 15 internationally important sites for waterbirds.

"These sites for waterbirds across the East Asian-Australasian Flyway are designated as Flyway Network Sites, showing how conservation efforts for migratory species interconnect," he pointed out.

Cimatu also noted the efforts to rehabilitate Boracay and Manila Bay which are important habitats of migratory birds.



### **Akreditasyon ng Manila Water Lab Services, aprubado hanggang 2022**

Patuloy na magkakaroon ng malinis na inuming tubig ang publiko alinsunod sa Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water (PNSDW) ng pamahalaan.

Ito ay makaraang aprubahan ng Department of Health (DOH) Metro Manila Center for Health Development ang renewal ng Manila Water Laboratory Services' laboratory accreditation hanggang taong 2022.

Ang akreditasyon ay magbibigay daan sa MWLS na magsagawa ng chemical, physical, at microbiological analysis kahit ang samples ay mula sa labas ng Metro Manila's East Zone.

Kinilala rin ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang MWLS bilang isang environmental laboratory.

Ang pagkilala ng DENR ay resulta ng isinagawang inspection at assessment ng Board of Chemistry, academe at industry experts na kinomisyon ng DENR Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

Ang Environmental laboratories ay otorisado ng DENR na magkaroon ng environmental data para sa environmental impact assessment, environmental monitoring at research activities na susupporta sa pagpapatupad ng mga alituntunin at batas ng pamahalaan para mapangalagaan ang kapaligiran ng ating bansa. (Angie dela Cruz)



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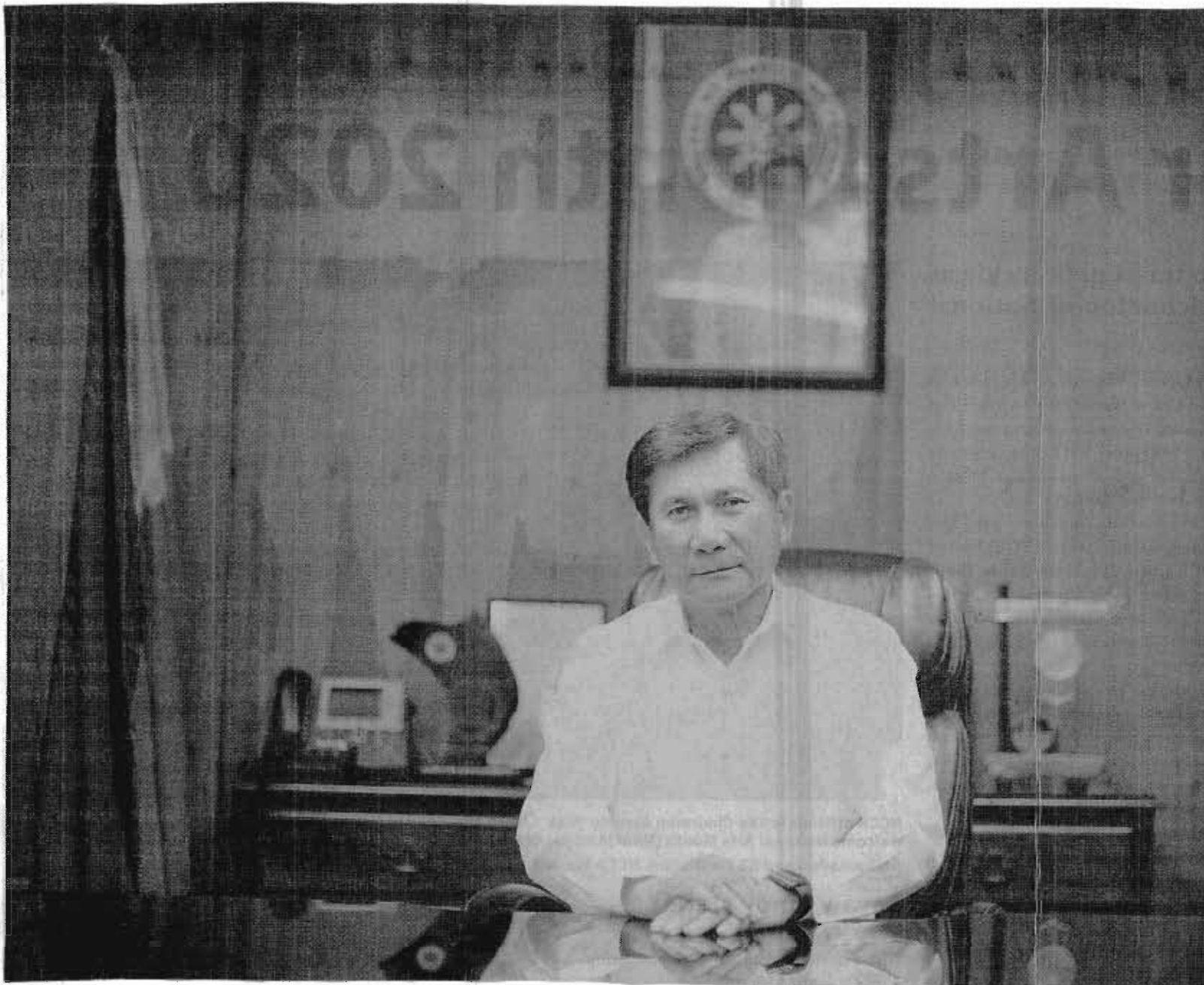
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# DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and his battle for Mother Earth



DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and his battle for Mother Earth

BY IZA IGLESIAS

**T**O protect the environment should not only be a choice but an obligation for all. Both legally and morally, a person should always live within the bounds of environmental consciousness for very basic fact that healthy ecosystems are crucial to sustain life of all forms and ultimately ensure the world's survival.

Certainly, the government plays a crucial role in guiding citizens toward this path, and no one knows this more than Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Agullana Cimatu.

It was on May 8, 2017 when Cimatu took his oath as the 16th chief of the DENR following an illustrious career in the military and Foreign Service.

"I was caught by surprise when President Rodrigo Roa Duterte told me that right then and there in Malacañang he would swear me in as DENR Secretary," Cimatu told *The Sunday Times Magazine* in an exclusive interview.

Underdressed for such an official ceremony, Cimatu laughingly recalled he had no choice but to hastily borrow a *Barong Tagalog* from a Presidential Security Guard in which he duly became a civil servant and cabinet secretary. As it later turned out, that fateful day was just first of many surprises that would come his way.

### Road to Mother Earth

Cimatu hails from Bangui, Ilocos Norte and is a product of the country's public school system. Prior to his stint in DENR, he forged a sterling military career that reached its apex when he became the 30th Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

In 2000, he was the decorated Commander who led the 4th Infantry Division in the all-out war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao. After a week of heavy fighting, the battle led to the capture of Camp Abubakar, the stronghold of the MILF and the seat of its Shariah-based government.

A day after his retirement from military service he was called by former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to serve as Special Envoy to the Middle East with the rank of Ambassador. His main responsibility was to ensure that no Filipino in the Middle East would be harmed amid the war in Iraq.

His foreign service continued in 2016, when he was appointed by President Duterte as special ambassador for Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) refugees. Little did he know at that point that his consistent performance in his various assignments would ultimately bring him face-to-face with the ills plaguing Mother Earth.

With Mr. Duterte known to turn to military men to take on the most challenging endeavors of his administration, he surprised Cimatu not only with the post of DENR Secretary but with his first biggest order: To clean-up what the President had called a "cesspool" — the country's famed Boracay island. Certainly surprised by the destination's poor state, Cimatu took the challenge with military zeal and recommended the six-month closure of the island despite much resistance from the business sector, high-ranking government officials and even some of Boracay's residents.

Neither did Cimatu fail the President nor Mother Earth herself, for after six months, he was able to turn over Boracay to its people and tourism in all its glory.

### Onward for earth and country

Cimatu's success in the closure of

Boracay did not only result in the rebirth of the country's most popular tourist destination but another unexpected and gargantuan task from the President. Onward for earth and country, Cimatu proceeded with the cleanup of the heavily polluted Manila Bay in January 2019.

Unperturbed by neither the danger nor magnitude involved in his next task, Secretary Cimatu readily took the challenge and launched the Battle for Manila Bay.

The Battle for Manila Bay is a three-phase program that aims to rehabilitate and restore Manila Bay, like Boracay, to its former glory. The first phase includes the clean-up and restoration of its water quality; the second phase, resettlement and/or relocation of informal settler families (ISFs); and the third phase, education and sustainment.

Ultimately, the program focuses on winning the war on waste which is traced as the primary source of pollution in the bay. To do this, the DENR, in coordination with local government of the cities and municipalities surrounding the Manila Bay area, hired *estero* rangers to police people who litter and pollute rivers and creeks, and to ensure that garbage even from the innermost barangays are collected.

Currently, the Battle for Manila Bay is in its first phase and Cimatu is determined to see it through with a win for the environment to the very end.

### General Pacman and more

"General Pacman," as he was nicknamed for his aggressiveness during the war in the south, has always succeeded in his missions in the military and for OFWs, just as he succeeds today — with focus and determination — in every task he takes on for Mother Earth: From planting trees to—more importantly—planting the seeds of a change in mindset in every Filipino to care for the environment.

Today, get to know more about Secretary Cimatu — the decorated soldier, skilled negotiator, silent worker and warrior of Mother Earth in the following interview with *The Sunday Times Magazine*.

*The Sunday Times Magazine: Can you recall for our readers your experience with the Philippine Army? Was it always your dream to become a soldier?*

*Secretary Cimatu: I am a proud member of Philippine Military Acad-*



DEAR Secretary Roy Cimatu and his battle for Mother Earth

emy (PMA) *Magiting* Class 1970. If I had not been admitted to the PMA, I would have been an electrical engineer or practicing any career connected to electronics. I did not really dream of being a military man but I was inspired by my brother whom I used to watch marching in the PMA. So, I entered PMA and joined the Philippine Army branch of service.

As a military officer, like everyone else, I dreamt of becoming a general. I never thought that I would become the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and I am really grateful for this. I do not claim to be the best and the brightest in my class. I just happened to be at the right place at the right time.

**In your opinion, what do you think led the President to appoint you as the head of the DENR?**

That is also my question (laughs). Actually all I know about taking care of the environment is planting trees. But the President knows me as someone who does not want to fail. Whatever task is given to me, I would do it to the best of my ability and use everything in my power to see through its completion.

I did not have any advance knowledge about the appointment. At that time, I was preoccupied in coming up with a proposal and recommendation on how to strengthen efforts for OFWs. So, I went to Malacañang to submit the proposal but I was told to proceed to the Conference Room instead. I noticed that everybody was in *Barong Tagalog* and I was the only one in polo shirt. I ended up borrowing a *barong* from one of the President's security details. It was only then that I learned that I was going to succeed the late DENR Secretary Gina Lopez.

**What was President Duterte's marching order?**

No corruption. That was his only order. Manage the agency well and ensure that it is corruption-free.

The President was also aware that I did not know anything about DENR but he appointed me based on how he knows me — that I am a person who does not want to fail.

**What have you brought to your post and agency, which you believe is effective toward your goal of protecting and preserving the environment?**

They say I militarized the agency. But I told them, I was civilianized by the DENR. I did not bring my military peers to replace anybody. We have a throng of capable personnel here led by the Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries. What I brought in was my military training and discipline. The military brand of management and supervision.

**What challenges do you encounter as Environment Secretary? How do you handle them?**

I learned that DENR is civilian work; it is civil service. But one thing that I want to inculcate in everyone here is that DENR is not only a desk job. Our job is not pencil pushing only. There is also the operations part.

This idea of "operations" was tested and instantly understood by everybody when I accepted the mission from the President to clean Boracay. It was done more like a military operation. The DENR, as an agency of civilians, was able to witness how we do it in the military, from conceptualizing the operation, planning, carrying it out, and supervising.

I was there in Boracay. I think I was there every week and was really hands-on providing guidance and supervision. What could not be done by previous administrations was done in six months. Aside from the political will, there really was a need for a management style honed in discipline and a commitment not to fail.

Some say it is the greatest achievement of DENR. I don't look at it that way. After all, it is an inter-agency effort. It is the great achievement of people working together toward a common goal. The guidance and supervision I gave was expected of me as the head of the agency. But what is important is that people came to realize that even in a civilian office, an operation like that in a military, is possible, and the desk job supports the operations. The operations carry out the concepts planned in the desk. That dynamics bring results.

**The Boracay cleanup was really a success. Can you tell us more about your campaign in rehabilitating Manila Bay?**

The rehabilitation of Manila Bay is difficult but it is doable. After Bora-

cay, we are again being tested here in Manila Bay and Pasig River but I am not backing out.

The success may be attributed to me, but it rightfully belongs to everybody. The entire DENR family was behind the cleanup of Boracay in partnership with various government agencies.

As to the challenge of cleaning Manila Bay and the Pasig River, this is a war to be waged by the whole DENR. I provide leadership and supervision, everybody else does his or her own role. For example, the Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service provides the necessary messages to the target audience. That is how we work here: Teamwork. We are all in this together; we are all called to make possible the impossible.

I am very happy and the DENR is very lucky to have this team of people led by the Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries.

**Despite the challenges of the Manila Bay clean up, do you see it as a compliment albeit another task because of your success in Boracay?**

A compliment or a new task doesn't matter. I was challenged. The President gave the order and I accepted the challenge.

But come to think of it, even before the President tasked me, there was already this continuing *Mandamus* from the Supreme Court directing concerned government agencies and private entities to clean up, rehabilitate, preserve, restore and maintain the waters of Manila Bay. This is the basis of the Administrative Order No. 16 signed by President Duterte to expedite the cleanup of Manila Bay.

To have a clean Manila Bay, we need to clean Pasig River, clean the *esteros* and the tributaries. This is enshrined in our Constitution that says: "It is the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature."

We have done something already. Not yet very visible but we will continue what we have started.



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## DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and his Battle for Mother Earth

### ***In your opinion, do you think we can still use the Pasig river?***

Yes. Pasig River can still be saved if we all want to. This is the reason why we are cleaning the *esteros*. You want a clean Manila Bay? Let us clean the Pasig River. You want a clean Pasig River? Let us clean the *esteros*.

You see, most of the rivers in Metro Manila drain to the Pasig River. That is why we need to start from the source which are the *esteros*. This again goes back to the practice of garbage disposal.

### ***Besides the clean-up of Manila Bay, what are the other priority projects of DENR?***

Solid waste management is among the priority programs of the DENR. Given its magnitude, it needs immediate and stronger action and support from everyone.

The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act 9003) states that every province must have a solid waste management plan. Every town needs to have a sanitary landfill. But when I visited the provinces in our country, I saw that there is only 10 percent compliance.

I always discuss this with DENR officials and personnel and I ask them why people take the law for granted? What can we do? So, we all go back to culture change to resolve the issue.

We are seeing non-compliance.

We have too much garbage. No one is doing segregation. There is too much plastic.

### ***What is your vision and future plans for the DENR?***

We were challenged in Boracay and we delivered. The same with Manila Bay and Pasig River. I assure you, we shall deliver.

I am slowly transforming the DENR, slowly changing the attitude and appreciation of all employees who see their work as merely desk jobs. I have been telling everyone, DENR is service. We are implementing laws on mining, water, air, forestry and solid waste management.

From Day One, I have said that we need culture change or behavior change. For instance, look around you, take the fast food chains as an example. It is only in the Philippines where people leave the table after eating without cleaning up. There is no effort to "clean as you go". We leave utensils, table appointments, food wrappers, excess food on the table. Not only is this cumbersome to the food crew and the next customers, this also reflects our attitude toward our environment. If we don't know how to dispose trash properly, we don't know how to take care of our environment.

If we want to bring culture change, we need to go back to the basics. Similar to our strategy in Manila Bay, we start from the *esteros*, then to the rivers like Pasig River, and finally to Manila Bay.

From the family to the school, and to the society, we should teach the lesson of owning the cleanup of our environment and our surroundings. It should always be the path taken by everyone.

Let us start with Good Manners and Right Conduct at home and in school. Teach children the proper way to take care of the environment in the language they can easily understand. We shall use broadcast media like the television, computer apps, books and everything else that can effectively carry out our message.

### ***How is the morale of the DENR personnel these days?***

Human resource is the best asset of any agency that is why the morale of my people has always been my priority. I will not tolerate the death of a forest ranger. I will not allow illegal loggers to bully my field personnel who are the front liners in the protection of our natural resources.

More importantly, the good performance of a DENR employee will not go unnoticed.

The success of the DENR is shared with everyone in the Department. When I visit our field offices, down to our Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENROs), I make sure I recognize, commend, or promote people who have rendered exemplary service.

My term in the DENR is characterized by many firsts. There is the Boracay cleanup that was planned by my predecessors but was never finished. I also created a policy to designate lawyers to man the frontlines which is the CENRO. Recently, we have created a Task Force to handle environmental crimes while we wait for Congress to act on our proposal for the creation of an Enforcement Bureau.

The overwhelming dedication of my people is a clear evidence of the level of their morale.

### ***What can the public expect from the agency in the next three years or until the end of the Duterte administration?***

We hope to achieve culture change. We expect to complete the cleanup of Manila Bay. We take pride in having been challenged and of being able to deliver.

I hope to accomplish at least 70 percent of our mission and then to let the next generation finish what we have started.

I came to the DENR knowing only how to plant trees. It is my wish that when I leave, I have planted the seed of culture change. I wish that I have contributed to the positive change in the perspective and behavior of people. I wish to see every Filipino conscious of his or her action and fully aware that taking good care of our environment and our natural resources is our obligation to our children.

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DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and his battle for Mother Earth

Secretary Cimatu readily took the challenge of the President to clean up Boracay and with military zeal, he recommended the six-month closure of the island despite much resistance from the business sector, high-ranking government officials and even from some of its residents.



With Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores, Secretary of Public Works and Highways Mark Villar, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello 3rd and Budget Secretary Benjamin Diok no during the Boracay rehabilitation planning.





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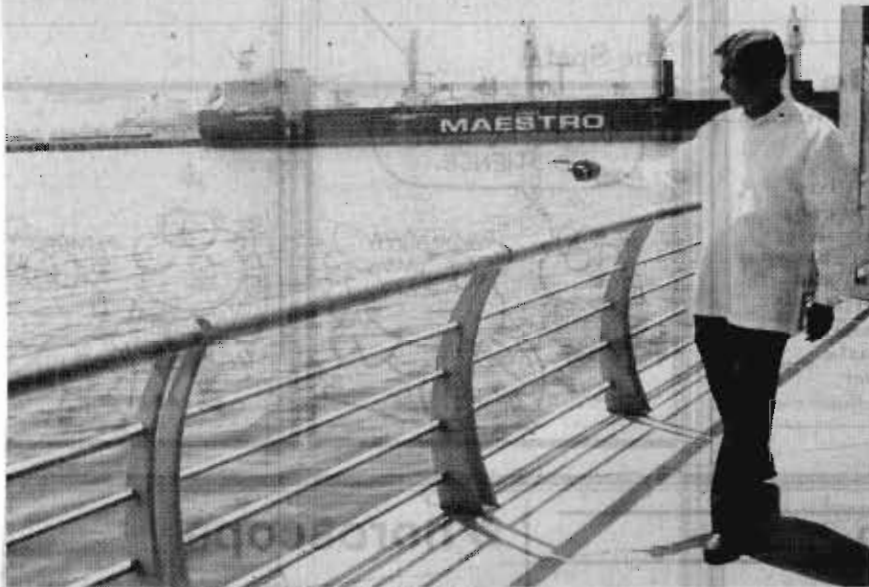
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DEAR secretary Roy Cimatu and his battle for our Mother Earth



Spending time with the children of Ati Village in Boracay.



Unperturbed by any danger and the magnitude of the task ahead, Secretary Cimatu took the challenge and launched the Battle for Manila Bay.

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DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and his Battle for Natural Earths



Prior to his stint in the DENR, Secretary Cimatu gained prominence from a sterling military career that reached its apex when he became the 30th Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.



With President Rodrigo Duterte during DENR's anniversary. It was on May 8, 2017 when Secretary Cimatu took his oath as the 16th chief of the agency to assume his role as a civil servant following an illustrious career in the military and Foreign Service.



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# DOT starts Baguio rehab with Burnham Park restoration

BY GELYKA RUTH R. DUMARAOS  
Photos from DOT OPAA

**A**FTER Boracay Island and Manila Bay's rehabilitation, the Department of Tourism (DOT) now shifts focus on the major restoration of Baguio City, starting with over P480-million budget for the historic Burnham Park.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat announced the P480-million budget through its investment arm Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, as part of their agreement with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The budget for the major attraction will be for the construction of view deck and boat dock, installation of terrace planters, view deck renovation, and plant box improvement in the Burnham Lake.

It will also be invested in the landscaping, lighting and electrical works, hardscape and softscape, gazebo and restroom construction, and installation of play equipment for the children's playground.

## Burnham Park closure

WELCOMING the help from DOT, DENR, and DILG, Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong presented the city's four major areas that needs rehabilitation—environment, traffic and transport, water supply, tourist destination, and geohazard areas or the areas occupied by informal settlers.

Unlike Boracay, which faced closure for six months, Romulo Puyat clarified that Baguio City will not be closed as the city is the gateway to the Cordilleras.

Burnham Park's restoration will be done in parts, while other areas will still be opened to the public. The rehab will start this May, and the expected completion of the restoration might take a year and a half.



DOT signs MOA with City Mayor Benjamin Magalong for the rehabilitation of Baguio City.



DOT, through Tieza, gives P4.80 million for its rehabilitation

There are specific destinations, however, which will be entirely closed during their restoration, such as Mines View Park and Bayan Park. Also included in the pipeline for rehab are the Arboretum, Botanical Garden, Tree Park and Wright Park.

Given Baguio City's overpopulation and overtourism, the city's sewage treatment plant and waste system will also be a priority. Romulo Puyat, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año, Environment Assistant Secretary Jesus Enrico Salazar, and Magalong inspected Baguio City's sewage treatment plant where plans of its rehabilitation and construction

of additional plants, and upgrading of the sewer line system are in the offing. The Irisan dump site is also eyed to be turned into an eco-park.

The local chief executive said that major changes will be in the pipeline, including the plan of building a smart city where there is an elevated system for security and safety, traffic management, smart lighting, no-contact apprehensions and environment monitoring are being executed.

"The solutions of the past are no longer the solutions of the present," he said. "We must have an open mind to address and welcome these changes."



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DOT starts Baguio rehab with Burnham Park restoration

### Overtourism

IN her speech at the Mansion House, Romulo Puyat stressed the leading concern of overtourism in the City of Pines. "Too much tourists come to the city contributing greatly jammed roads; obstructed views; locals leaving to make way for holiday and summer rentals; and the fragile environment is slowly deteriorating."

Currently, Baguio City has an estimated 370,000 population, and nearly 800,000 tourist arrivals were recorded from the months of January to September 2019, alone. In 2018, it showed that there were 1,760,729 tourists' arrivals in 2018.

This leads to a more alarming state for the tourist hub, linking it with big city problems, like traffic, overcrowding, water shortages and growing pollution. "But it is not too late," she added. "We can stop overtourism with sustainable tourism."

She said the issue on the city's carrying capacity should be done by establishing the ideal number of visitors that can be accommodated without harming or affecting the environment. All these, while meeting the expectations of the visitors, and respecting the needs and preserving the culture of the locals.

Romulo Puyat encouraged everyone to join in the #SaveOurSpots movement. She said, "Just like our previous collective efforts have demonstrated, rehabilitation is possible when done properly and when everyone is convinced of the merits of sustainable tourism development. The current thrust of the DOT is to encourage everyone to #SaveOurSpots, instilling the culture of responsible tourism and greater concern for our environment."

She added that the agencies shall be applying the lessons they learned from their drive of preserving the different destinations in the country, such as El Nido and Coron in Palawan; Panglao in Bohol; Siargao in Surigao del Norte; and Manila Bay.



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# DUTERTE REJECTS MANILA BAY RECLAMATION PROJECTS

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has rejected the proposed Manila Bay reclamation projects, saying these will "choke the entire Manila."

"Not in my time. If you allow one, you have to allow all. If I allow that, I will choke Manila. The entire City of Manila will be put in peril," the President said in his speech during the inauguration of the Sangley Airport Development Project in Cavite City.

"Manila is an old city. It will decay if you add so many things in front of Manila Bay," he added.

The proposed 25-project development covers 10,000 hectares from Navotas City to Cavite.

Duterte earlier described the

scope of the proposals as "almost mind-boggling and stupefying."

The President said the proposals were among the reasons why he transferred the power to approve reclamation projects to the Office of the President from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Economic Development Authority.

"This is why the reclamation authority—I took it back because I heard every Tom, Dick and Harry was lobbying and following up. You just

wait until the next president who might look at it kindly with a different set of lens," he said.

"Reclamation will only be approved for government projects," the President added.

According to the PRA, at least four of the 25 projects—the Navotas City coastal bay reclamation project, the Pasay 360-hectare reclamation project, the Pasay 265-hectare reclamation project and the Horizon Manila 418-hectare reclamation project—have already been given notices to proceed.



## Walang reclamation project sa Manila Bay – Digong

Hindi papayagan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang anumang reclamation project sa Manila Bay habang siya ang nakaupong Presidente ng bansa.

Ito ang mensahe ng Pangulo sa mga lokal na opisyal ng Cavite matapos pangunahan ang inagurasyon ng Sangley Airport Development Project sa Sangley Point, Cavite kahapon.

Harap-harapang sinabi ng Pangulo sa mga opisyal ng Cavite na kahit isang pribadong proyekto ay hindi niya papayagan sa Manila Bay.

Pero kung may koneksiyon ito sa mga proyekto ng gobyerno ay bibigyan ng go signal.

"Not during my time. I will only allow maybe plans of whatever reclamation if it is in connection with government projects. I will not allow massive reclamation for a

private sector. Not now," anang Pangulo.

Kapag aniya pinayagan ang mga ikinakasang pribadong reclamation projects ay tiyak na malalagay sa panganib ang buong Metro Manila.

Dapat aniyang pag-aralan ito ng susunod na Presidente dahil tiyak na mabubulok ang Metro Manila kapag naglagay ng mga istruktura sa Manila Bay.

"If I will do that, it will choke Manila. The entire Manila City would be environmentally at peril," dagdag pa ng Pangulo.

Ipinaliwanag din ni Pangulong Duterte kung bakit inilagay niya sa ilalim ng pangangasiwa nito ang Reclamation Authority matapos makarating sa kanya na maraming politikong nagla-lobby para sa reclamation projects.

"Yung Reclamation Authority kinuha ko because I heard that everybody was lobbying for it. And it came to my attention that every Tom, Dick and Harry in town was following-up. No, no reclamation. You wait until the next President," dagdag pa ng Pangulo.

Kabilang sa mga reclamation projects na ikinakasa umano ay ang itatayong housing projects sa Bacoor, Cavite na inalmanan ng mga residente dahil maaapektuhan ang industriya ng tahong na kanilang pinagkakakitaan. **(Aileen Taliping)**



## TAGUIG EYES SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN

By Joel E. Zurbano  
and Willie Casas

THE city of Taguig is joining other local government units in Metro Manila in phasing out single-use plastics.

Mayor Lino Edgardo Cayetano, who convened the city's Solid Waste Management Board Friday, said the local government will reduce solid waste by 80 percent in three years.

Cayetano urged residents to use canvas bags or ecobags as alternative to plastic bags when shopping for sundries such as meat, fruits, and vegetables.

The initiative came a month after the Parañaque city government announced the ban of single-use plastic in all commercial establishments.

Other cities in the National Capital Region like Makati, Quezon, Pasig, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, and Pasay have already said no to single-use plastic.

Studies have shown that the Philippines is one of the top producers of plastic waste in the world.

The Taguig city government also announced it will establish a Sustainable Livelihood Office that will help look for eco-friendly alternatives to plastic.

"This green initiative will contribute to the overall health and well-being in Taguig, addressing flood problems and other environmental concerns," said Cayetano.

The city chief executive said the move will also create employment opportunities for many residents such as waste collectors, monitoring staff, and MRF (materials recovery facility) caretakers.

"The key for this is information dissemination. Focusing on segregating-at-source, every household, school, business in Taguig will be taught how to properly manage their trash," he said.



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## Collect and recycle plastics, companies urged

By Aldwin Qultasol

BAGUIO CITY – In a move to curb plastic pollution in the country, Baguio City Rep. Mark Go has filed a bill that mandates commercial establishments and manufacturing firms to recover, collect, recycle and dispose plastic waste and non-biodegradable materials.

Once passed into law, House Bill 6180 shall require commercial establishments such as supermarkets, office buildings, malls, food chains and retail buildings to collect and recover used plastic from their customers before these are surrendered to their respective manufacturers for proper disposal or recycling.

According to Go, accountability should be placed on manufacturing companies and commercial establishments

that use plastics and non-biodegradable materials by including the collection and recovery of used plastics as part of their corporate social responsibility.

He cited figures from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' 10-year National Solid Waste Management Status Report, wherein plastics comprise 38 percent of the country's solid waste with a continuous increase in commercial and industrial usage.

Go also referred to the "sachet phenomenon" in the country which led to the increase in non-biodegradable plastic usage, clogging drainages, waterways and polluting the streets.

The lawmaker stressed that in spite of solid waste management guidelines outlined in Republic Act 9003, also known as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2001, strong efforts are crucial in feasibly utilizing solid waste and plastic materials.





# Taguig vows less solid waste in 3 years

**By Raymart T. Lolo**  
*@tribunephil\_lolo*

Taguig City Mayor Lino Cayetano has committed to reduce solid waste in the city by at least 80 percent in the next three years.

The initiative is expected to contribute to the overall health and well-being in Taguig, as well as addressing flood problems and other environmental concerns in the city.

In line with the effort, many Taguiguenos will be provided with employment opportunities such as waste collectors, monitoring staff and caretakers.

"All these will yield higher productivity and greater economic development," the local government stated.

As a part of the green initiative, the Taguig City government said all succeeding infrastructure projects of the city will have a materials recovery facility. Waste collected and brought to the MRF goes toward composting, repurposing for community gardens and

landfills.

"A technical working group that will survey all 28 barangays for the appropriate land for the facilities shall be created for this," the LGU said.

Meanwhile, Taguig City is joining global efforts to phase out single-use plastics.

Citizens are encouraged to use canvas bags or eco bags as an alternative to plastic bags when shopping for sundries,

such as meat, fruits, and vegetables.

The mayor encouraged each barangay captain to take the lead in their communities in the initiative with the city committing to provide training and support.

"The key for this is information dissemination. Focusing on segregating at source, every household, school and business in Taguig will be taught how to properly manage their trash," Cayetano said.



## Baguio solon vows win-win solution for small-scale miners

By ZALDY COMANDA

BAGUIO CITY — Baguio City Representative Congressman Mark Go is willing to hold hearings on his proposed House Bill (HB) No. 5619, that will declare this city as a mining-free zone.

"I am willing to hold hearings on my proposed bill. I will inform the House committee in-charge," Go said as he vowed to come up with a win-win solution to address the small-scale mining issue in the city, and alleviate the plight of local pocket miners, while making sure that measures would be in place to protect the environment.

Go's action came after his meeting with some leaders of local small-scale mining associations on Friday. The meeting lasted for more than an hour.

He urged local pocket miners to commit themselves to practice responsible mining for the good of the city and its populace.

The meeting was attended by Leoncio Na-oy of the Baguio Federation of Small-Scale Gold Miners Inc. (BFSSGM), also the group's representative to the City Mining Regulatory Board (CMRB), Neri Reynold Fangloy, president of Batawel Small-Scale Mining Association (Atok Trail) and Butch Cuilan Uabac, Camp 7, Kennon road.

Others who attended were City Vice Mayor Faustino Olowan, and

Faye Apil, officer-in-charge of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB-Cordillera).

During the meeting, Go strongly requested the MGB to come up with specifications like suggestions – amendments and courses of actions on the issue. He urged MGB to come up with a timeline to tackle the issue. He suggested three to six months period.

Go appealed to MGB to come up with an "honest to goodness" list of areas feasible or applicable for mining activity in the city.

Apil said her office was ready to submit a list, together with the Technical Working Group (TWG) report, relative to the proposed bill.

Olowan, a key figure in the dispute because of his assistance to small-scale miners, urged MGB to focus on regulatory instead of conducting closures versus the operations of small-scale mining here.

He also suggested that a larger meeting be conducting, calling on all small-scale miners operating in the city to find out the "real" sentiments, so that authorities would be able to arrive at realistic solutions. The meeting shall include members of the CMRB.

During the discussion, Na-oy, also an officer of Emerald Small-Scale Mining Association (Kias-PMA), said his group has been conducting regular

environmental, health and safety programs for years, in collaboration with the government and non-government organizations.



**BUHAYING** muli ang kabundukang nilaspag ng QUARRY OPERATIONS ang haharapin at isusulong ni ANGONO MUNICIPAL MAYOR JERI MAE CALDERON sa oras na maitaboy na ang nagsasagawa ng mga nangwasak ng kabundukan sa kanilang munisipalidad.

Ito ang kaniyang inihayag sa naging COURTESY VISIT ng mga bumubuo ng PAMAMARISAN (Pasig, Mandaluyong, MARIKINA, SAN Juan) RIZAL PRESS CORPS sa kaniyang tanggapan, na aniya ay kailangang matigil na ang pagsira sa kanilang kabundukan dahil perhuwisyo na ang sinasapit ng kanilang bayan dulot sa pagwasak ng mga kabundukan.

Kinakailangan umanong buhayin uli ang nawasak na kabundukan sa pamamagitan ng reforestation o ang matamnan muli ng mga puno ang mga lugar na pinagkakalbo ng mga QUARRY COMPANY.

Ang bayan ng ANGONO sa RIZAL PROVINCE na kinilalang "ART CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES" ay may lawak nang 212 ektarya ang napaghuhukay ng QUARRY OPERATIONS, na ang lugar ay nasasakupan ng BRGY. SAN ROQUE at BRGY. SAN ISIDRO..., kung saan, ang kanilang mga ilog ay naperhuwisyo na dahil sa epekto ng quarrying bukod pa sa pagkakasakit ng mga naninirahan sa bisnidad ng quarrying.

Malaki mang pinansiyal ang najaambag ng QUARRY OPERATIONS sa naturang munisipalidad ay isasantabi na muna at hindi na umano papayagan pang lumawig ang taon ng operasyon na mag-

## QUARRY IPAGBABAWAL NA SA ANGONO!

tatapos ang kontrata sa taong 2021 ng LA FARGE AGGREGATES at ng CONCRETE AGGREGATES CORPORATION.

Ang QUARRY OPERATIONS sa naturang bayan ay may permiso mula sa DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR) at ang partisipasyon lamang ng ANGONO MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ay ang pagbibigay ng ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE (ECC) para sa social acceptability na isinasaad ng MINING ACT of 1995.

Gayunman, simula pa sa administrasyon ni dating MAYOR at ngayon ay VICE MAYOR GERRY CALDERON (ama ni MAYOR JERI MAE) ay naghangad na itong patigilin na ang QUARRY OPERATIONS. Simula noong mga taong 2001, 2007, 2012, 2018 at nitong nakaraang taon ay pinadadlhan na ng abiso ang quarrying na hindi na palalawigin pa ang operasyon. Sa abisong ito ng munisipalidad ay sinagot din ng MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU (MGB) sa pagsasaad ng kahalagahan ng QUARRY OPERATIONS na nakapag-aambag ng malaking pinansiyal para sa MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT at mga ambag pinansiyal sa mga naapektuhan ng quarrying.

"Kapag naipasara at natigil ang quarry sa kabundukan ng Angono, mababawasan na rin ang gastusin ng ating Pamahalaan sa hukay ilog dahil sa river siltation na ina-attributed sa quarry. Mayroon din tayong hinahawakan na Final Mine Rehabilitation and Decommissioning Plan na aprubado ni MGB DIRECTOR ATTY. WILFREDO MONCANO noong July 11, 2018," pahayag ni MAYOR JERI MAE CALDERON.

Kapag naisakatuparan ang pagpapatigil ng operasyon ng quarrying sa ANGONO ay hindi lamang mga ENVIRONMENTALIST ang

matutuwa kundi maging ang ARYA ay sasaludo sa liderato ng magamang CALDERON..., na bagama't maraming mga residente ng ANGONO ang nakikinabang sa quarry sa pagiging mga trabahador ay maaari namang maasistehan ito ng kanilang PAMAHALAANG MUNISIPALIDAD para magkaroong muli ng mga pangkabuhayan.

"The water at Wawa River has turned brown because that's where the sediment goes during the rainy season. I want mining to stop, so that I can see again our mountains in good condition," pagpupunto ng 29-anyos na MAYORA ng ANGONO.

Natatandaan ko, nitong nakaraang taon, ang MGB ay kumuha ng PR AGENCY para pagandahin ang imahe ng MINING sa ating bansa (multi-milyong piso ang ibinayad sa PR AGENCY)... na bukod sa nakapagbibigay ng pangkabuhayan sa mamamayan ay pinangangalagaan tulad ng MINING at QUARRYING ang pangangalaga sa kalikasan tulad ng reforestation o pagtatanim ng puno sa mga natapos nang mapagbubungkal na mga kabundukan..., pero tila hindi naman yata ito nagagawa ng MINERS and QUARRY OPERATORS kaya pinalalayas na lang ng ANGONO GOVERNMENT?

\*\*\*

Kung kayo po ay may mga puna o reklamo lalo na sa mga nababatikos ng ARYA ay maaari kayong mag-email sa [irvincorpuz22@gmail.com](mailto:irvincorpuz22@gmail.com) para sa inyong panig o kaya ay magtext sa 09997806557.



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# Keeping 'balangay' legacy alive

By Erwin M. Mascariñas  
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BUTUAN CITY—On Dec. 17 last year, two wooden boats docked at the port of nearby Nasipit town, in Agusan del Norte province, the modern gateway for goods and people in the Caraga region. They had earlier sailed from Palawan to Cebu in time for the launching of a 500-day countdown to the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Mactan next year.

The 18-meter and 21-meter boats are replicas of the "balangay," a vessel used by mariners of an ancient civilization that developed along the mighty Agusan River during the third century. These balangay are navigated through the way of ancient mariners by relying on the position of the sun and stars, wind direction, cloud formations, wave patterns and bird flights.

Tapping the traditional navigational methods would, in a way, "resurrect the seafaring spirit of our forefathers," leading people to appreciate "what [they were] are capable of doing, ... as adventurous seafarers and discoverers," said Arturo Valdez, who led the crew.

The boats do not have modern navigational aids and are only equipped with small engines for use in case of emergency.

"Now I am back here in Butuan City, the home of the balangay, hopefully to stir the conscience and revive the pride, and remind everyone here that the balangay is a Butuan boat, and that Butuan is the balangay," Valdez said.

In 2006, Valdez organized the conquest by Filipino climbers of Mt. Everest.

To honor their arrival in Butuan, the city government



hosted a welcome ceremony for Valdez and his crew.

### Glorious past

The balangay, Valdez said, indicated that Butuan was once a center of trade and commerce in this part of the world, long before the arrival of the Spaniards.

Italian chronicler Antonio Pigafetta mentioned about the vessel in his accounts of Ferdinand Magellan's voyage in the 1500s.

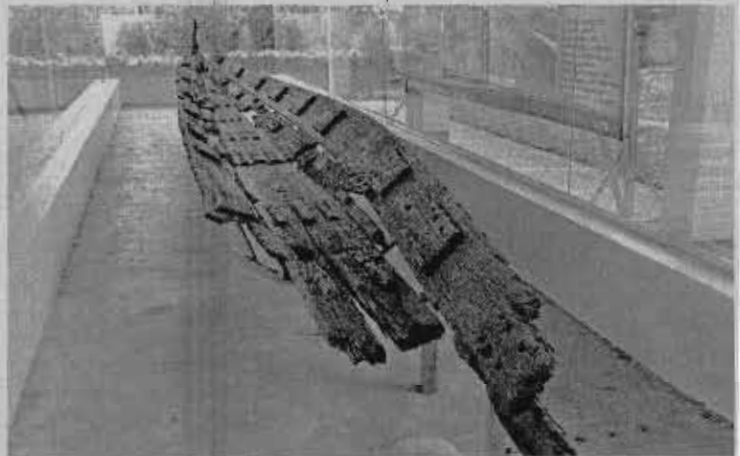
Historians have pointed out that jars found in an archaeological site in Butuan indicated that the city had trading ties with old kingdoms in its immediate neighborhood of Southeast Asia and China, and as far as Persia, now Iran.

"We have a boat that precedes even the Viking ships," said Valdez, who has been using the balangay voyages since 2009 to talk about the Philippines' precolonial past and drum up pride in it.

The oldest balangay unearthed in Barangay Libertad in Butuan dates back to 320 AD. Other finds were dated around



**UNEARTHING HISTORY** A technician of the National Museum cleans parts of a wooden plank of a "balangay" during an archaeological excavation in Butuan City eight years ago.



**LOCAL TREASURE** Remnants of the "balangay," dated 320 AD, are on display at a National Museum site in Butuan's Barangay Libertad. —PHOTOS BY ERWIN MASCARIÑAS

900 AD and 1250 AD.

Treasure hunters discovered the ancient boats in 1976. Experts from the National Museum counted nine vessels, but in 2012, more diggings in the area yielded the tenth.

The boats have been declared national cultural treasures under Proclamation No. 86, issued by then President Corazon Aquino in March 1987.

So far, remnants of three boats had been dug. A more complete boat is on display at the Maritime Hall of the National Museum in Manila while another is at a National Museum site in Libertad.

### Replica

Excavations stopped in 2014 as funding ran short and access problems cropped up as the site



*Keeping Balangay legacy alive*  
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sits on private property.

Efforts to revive the balangay legacy came when the three replicas were built starting 2009. The boats set off on a voyage, with Valdez leading the crew that used the traditional navigation methods.

Valdez tapped the centuries-old boat-building knowledge of the Sama people of Tawi-Tawi to build the balangay replicas. He sought permission from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to harvest local hardwood species, like red "lawaan," apitong and "yakal," to build the boats.

Work on one boat, named "Diwata ng Lahi," was done at the Cultural Center of the Philippines complex next to Manila Bay while two—"Masawa Hong Butuan" and "Sama Tawi-Tawi"—were done in Butuan.

Diwata ng Lahi's first voyage was on Sept. 1, 2009, sailing from Manila to Butuan and passing by 54 ports. On Feb. 4, 2010, Masawa Hong Butuan joined Diwata ng Lahi in a voyage to Zamboanga City and on to Sulu where the third boat, Sama Tawi-Tawi, caught up with them from Butuan.

By September that year, all three boats journeyed to Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand and Singapore, and back to the Philippines.

After the voyage, the Diwata ng Lahi was loaned to the National Museum as a cultural exhibit. So was the Masawa Hong Butuan in Butuan.

Two more balangay were built in 2016 for a journey to commemorate the 600th year since the 1417 voyage of Sulu Sultan Paduka Pahala, popularly known as Sultan Paduka Batara, from Maimbung, Sulu, to Dezhou, a city in China's Shandong province.

For the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Mactan next year, the two replicas were named Raya Siyagu and Raya Kolambu in honor of the kings of Mazaua and Butuan, respectively.

**More support**

The building of the replicas has always been a private initiative. The first three boats were the fruits of collaboration among the TAO Community of Companies, Butuan Global Forum (BGF) and Kaya ng Pinoy Inc. Sulu Gov. Sakur Tan donated the wood materials, while private donors gave cash.

Today, the Sama Tawi-Tawi is docked in Palawan province, needing repairs.

Valdez and Jody Navarra of BGF cited the need for more support for the maintenance of the balangay as a way of continually reminding Filipinos of their rich history.

Agusan del Norte Rep. Lawrence Fortun, who is pushing for the declaration of balangay as the country's national boat, said the government should take a big part in funding the initiatives. He also hoped to have the private estate in Libertad declared a national historical site so that full development could be undertaken, and to hasten the settlement of ownership over the land.

Butuan Mayor Ronnie Vicente Lagnada promised to keep the balangay legacy alive by building more replicas. Tours along the Agusan River using the balangay are already being planned, he said.

"It's been more than a decade ... I think it is time to pass on the torch and I think there is no other better place to pass this on than to the people of Butuan, to the home of the balangay," Valdez said. INQ



## US Embassy hosts first Haquathon Summit

IN partnership with Save Philippine Seas (SPS), the United States Embassy in the Philippines hosted the first Haquathon Summit in Manila on Saturday.

Thirty-five teams participated in the event that served as a search for technology-based solutions to save the Philippines' waters. It was first held in the country from June 28 to 30, 2019.

The US Embassy on Saturday brought together the winners of last year's event for the summit at the F1 Hotel in Taguig City, where they reported on their progress and accomplishments in the development of their solutions.

The Haquathon winner in Manila was Trevali (TRaceability and EVALuation Intelligence), an app allowing small-time fisherfolk to certify and trace their catch while countering illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Runners-up were Junk Exchange, Project Serena (Solid Entraining Receptacle for Enviro Nautical Applications) and AQUAloop.

Junk Exchange is a solid waste management proposal to prevent marine pollution via "crowd-junking system."

Project Serena is a microplastics filtration device for fighting marine pollution in marinas and community estuaries.

AQUAloop is an off-grid, economical marine buoy system that gathers and transmits ocean data for research and education.

The Cebu winner was ParrotFishNet, an app that helps protect marine sanctuaries and coral reefs by employing Internet of Things (IoT) technology.

Runners-up in Cebu included KaPatrol App, WAQ (Water Quality Monitoring) System and ReefPatrol.

KaPatrol App is an offline mobile app for reporting and monitoring illegal fishing activities.

WAQ is an IoT system that measures water quality in coastal areas and aggregates results into a dynamic database.

Reef Patrol is an app providing

the public with real-time reef data for educational purposes, as well as to help the government regulate activities that harm coral reefs.

Philip Roskamp, the embassy's counselor for public affairs, thanked and commended all the participants for their "inspiring" efforts that could save marine species and human lives.

Plastic accumulating in oceans and on beaches has become a global crisis. Billions of pounds of plastic can be found in swirling convergences that make up about 40 percent of the world's ocean surfaces. At current rates, plastic is expected to outweigh all the fish in the sea by 2050.

Plastics pollution has a direct and deadly effect on wildlife. Thousands of seabirds and sea turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed each year after ingesting plastic or getting entangled in it.

The three-day program opened with an "AdvocaSea" workshop, bringing experts in marine re-

search and conservation together with tech innovators to address pressing issues facing our seas.

The 48-hour Haquathon followed the workshop.

Teams of students and professionals ranging from 14 to 74 years old developed tech-based solutions to address one of four categories: IUU fishing and coastal law enforcement; preventing or reducing marine pollution; coral reef conservation and restoration; or environmental education.

The program awarded seed funding to eight teams (four in each city) to further develop each group's winning proposal.

Winning teams and runners-up received seed grants of up to P80,000 to help them implement their solutions.

The US Embassy and SPS provided the eight teams with coaching, networking opportunities, and technology development support to turn their ideas into viable products.

**JAVIER JOE ISMAEL**



## Bernie Sanders' magical thinking on climate change

THE prospect of Bernie Sanders becoming the Democratic nominee has startled many people who worry that his brand of democratic socialism won't sell and would pave the way for a second Trump term. This might well be true, but it considers Sanders solely through the lens of electability. Surely the more important question is not whether his programs would be popular, but whether they are good. It's time to stop grading Bernie Sanders on a curve and to start asking what the country would look like if he were to become president.

Let's consider the topic that he argues is "the single greatest challenge" facing America and a "global emergency": climate change. Sanders wants to commit the United States to achieving 100 percent renewable energy for electricity and transportation by 2030 and the total decarbonization of the economy by 2050. These are laudable though ambitious goals. The question is, how will the US go about meeting them

Under Barack Obama, the US reduced emissions more than any other country. It did it through many paths, but the biggest one was — fracking.

US carbon emissions fell almost 15 percent from 2005 to 2016. According to Carbon Brief, the single largest cause was the shift from coal-fired power plants to natural gas ones, comprising 33 percent of the reduction. Adoption of solar power accounted for 3 percent, by comparison. (Natural gas has much lower rates of carbon emission than does coal. It also produces much less pollution than coal, saving thousands of lives in the US every year.)

Nevertheless, Bernie Sanders is opposed to natural gas. He opposes all new fracking and seeks to ban it nationwide within five years. He also intends to rapidly shut down all gas plants.



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ZAKARIA**

Natural gas accounts for about 30 percent of the energy consumption in America today. Wind and solar are under 5 percent. So, the plan would require an exponential jump in renewables — in just a few years.

And even if that happened, it would be extremely difficult to replace gas as a source for electricity. Talk to any electric utility company and they will explain. Because solar and wind are intermittent sources, they require a backup source in order to provide electricity to homes, offices and factories 24/7. That raises the costs associated with solar and wind.

Sanders has a solution: storage. If we had the means to store electricity on a massive scale, such as batteries, there would be no need for backup power. But we are not even close to having the kind of

storage capacity we would need to make this work. One example: the Clean Air Task Force, an energy policy think tank, calculated that for California to reach 100 percent electricity from renewables, it would need 36.3 million megawatt-hours of energy storage. It currently has 150,000 megawatt-hours of storage. In other words, the state would need to increase storage by 24,000 percent in a matter of years. Batteries are getting cheaper, but not fast enough.

There is another path to clean energy, a source that has zero carbon emissions and provides a continuous flow of electricity: nuclear power. It generates about 20 percent of the electricity in the US. It is the largest source of power in France and provides 40 percent of power in Sweden, two countries with carbon emission rates that are among the lowest per person in the industrialized world.

But Bernie Sanders opposes nuclear power. In fact, he plans to shut down all of America's nuclear power plants within 10 years. Fears about nuclear power, which Sanders clearly shares, are largely based on emotional reactions to the few high-profile accidents that have taken place over the last few decades. Such anxiety also ignores the millions of people who die each year due to fossil fuels. Our World in Data, an Oxford University-based think tank, just released a comprehensive accounting of the safest sources of energy, considering all harmful effects, including accidents. Nuclear energy was 250 times safer than oil and over 300 times safer than coal.

Let me be clear. Natural gas and nuclear power have drawbacks and costs. There is no perfect energy solution on hand today. But I believe that we do in fact face a global emergency and need every means possible to reduce emissions—now. Not tomorrow, not in theory. Now.

The Sanders green energy "plan" is based on magical thinking. It presumes that we can reduce emissions in electricity and transport to zero in 10 years, while simultaneously shutting down the only two low-emission, always-available sources of power that together provide nearly 60 percent of America's electricity. And that makes me wonder: is the real problem that Sanders will lose — or that he might win?

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