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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



P1 B Tullahan River project to boost Manila Bay rehab

San Miguel Corp.'s P1-billion initiative to dredge and expand the Tullahan River system will not only give the Manila Bay rehabilitation project a major boost, it will also help solve flooding in Bulacan ahead of plans to build the country's largest and most modern airport in the province.

The project, dubbed the Tullahan-Tinajeros River system dredging project, was launched Monday by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and SMC with local executives of Navotas, Malabon, Valenzuela and Bulacan, at the Navotas Centennial Park in Navotas City, where the 36.4-km Tullahan River drains into the Manila Bay.

SMC president and COO Ramon S. Ang described the Tullahan River as a spillway from Angat and Ipo dams that is supposed to drain excess water into the Manila Bay.

However, due to pollution, the buildup of garbage, silt, and illegal structures over the many decades, it has become clogged, shallow, and narrow.

This is why whenever there are typhoons or heavy rains, low-lying areas near the river, particularly Bulacan province, become flooded.

"This project is a dredging and expansion initiative to address the problems of the Tullahan River," Ang said. "First, we will take out the garbage, and then we will deepen the river so water can move more freely to the Manila Bay."

Keeping the Tullahan River garbage and pollution-free, Ang said, is critical to ensuring that the DENR's efforts to rehabilitate the Manila Bay under Secretary Roy Cimatu, will be a success.

It will also help ensure that flooding will no longer occur in low-lying areas such as Bulacan.

He called on local government officials' help in making sure that once the river cleaned, it will no longer be a dumping

area for garbage and other pollutants.

Ang also addressed issues raised by groups opposed to its planned new, \$15 billion Manila International Airport project to be built in Bulakan, Bulacan, some five kilometers away from the site of the dredging ceremony.

The airport, envisioned as the country's largest and most modern, is being framed by opposers as a potential source of flooding in the province.

"One hundred percent, this project will not worsen flooding in Bulacan, it will actually solve it. In the first place, foreign banks will not lend money for such major projects if they are not assured that you have addressed all environmental risks," he said.

Ang said that as part of preparatory work for the airport, the company had already hired expert foreign consultants

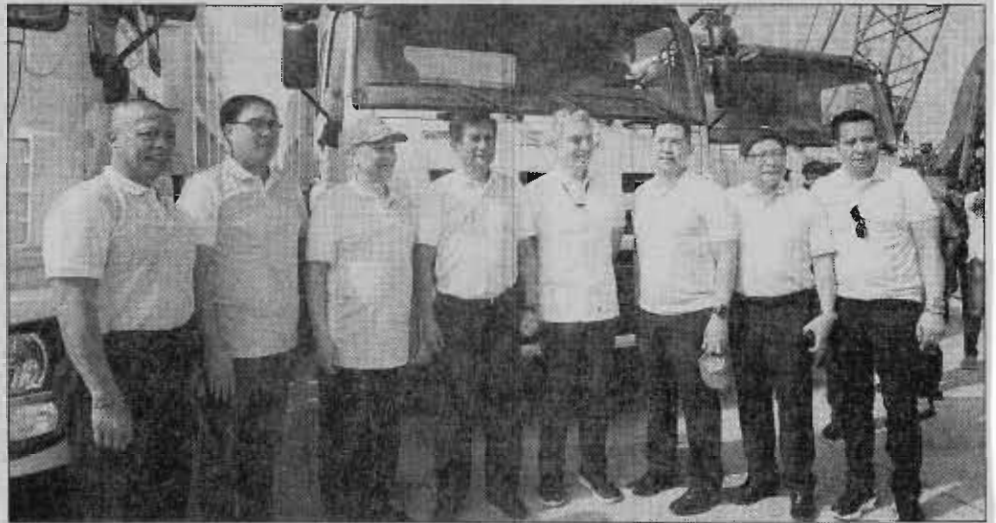
to study the flooding situation in Bulacan.

They have identified the rivers, creeks, tributaries, and bodies of water that need to be cleaned, deepened, widened, and improved, to address flooding in the province.

"We will expand our dredging and clean-up operations to include these bodies of water, and provide a long-term and sustainable solution to flooding in Bulacan," he added.

Ang said the new airport, a private endeavor with no government guarantees or subsidies, could bring in as much as 30 million tourists and will create so many jobs and livelihood opportunities for Filipinos.

He assured many would benefit from the project, including the provinces of Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pampanga, among many others.



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and San Miguel Corp. formally launched Monday the Tullahan-Tinajeros River system dredging project. DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu (4th from left) and SMC president and COO Ramon Ang (3rd from left) inspect the new equipment in Navotas with (from left) SMC VP and special assistant to the president Col. Ariel Querubin, DILG Usec. Epimaco Densing, Navotas Mayor Tobias Tiangco, Malabon Mayor Antolin Oreta, MMDA chair Danilo Lim, and Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando.



DENR starts Tullahan river cleanup

The city and national governments, together with the private sector, have started the cleanup of the Tullahan-Tinajeros river system in Malabon and Navotas.

Mayors Toby Tiangco of Navotas and Antolin Oreta III of Malabon led the formal launch of the cleanup at the Navotas Centennial Park on Monday.

The cleanup, part of a P1-billion investment to widen the river by removing silt and garbage, will start with dredging the river using the heavy equipment provided by San Miguel Corp. (SMC).

SMC president Ramon Ang said the heavy equipment made in Japan – backhoes with barges, 55-tonner cranes with barges, tugboats and dump trucks – will be stationed near the river so that the local and national government can sustain the dredging activities.

Ang said dredging the river system is a necessary step to ease flooding in Bulacan for the construction of the New Manila International Airport, another SMC project.

Tiangco said there is a need to sustain the cleanup of the 36.4-kilometer Navotas and Malabon river system.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the river cleanup is a necessary step for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. The river system flows from the La Mesa watershed and drains into the Manila Bay.

Cimatu said the coliform level in the Tullahan-Tinajeros river system dropped to 29 million average coliform level in 2019, from 269 million in 2018 and 10 billion in 2017.

“The cleanup of the river system is critical to our bigger mission of rehabilitating the Manila Bay,” Cimatu said.

– Marc Jayson Cayabyab



P1-B Tullahan River project seen solving flooding in Bulacan

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and San Miguel Corp. (SMC) launched the P1-billion dredging and expansion of the Tullahan River project at the Navotas Centennial Park in Navotas City on Monday.

The Tullahan-Tinajeros River System dredging project is seen to solve the perennial flooding in the province of Bulacan and some parts of Central Luzon as well as in the cities of Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela.

It is also expected to boost the Manila Bay rehabilitation project, as the 36.4-km Tullahan River drains into the bay.

SMC President and Chief Operating Officer Ramon S. Ang said, "This project is a dredging and expansion initiative to address the problems of the Tullahan River."

"First, we will take out the garbage, and then we will deepen the river so water can move more freely to the Manila Bay," he added.

Keeping the Tullahan River garbage- and pollution-free, Ang said, is critical to ensuring that the DENR's efforts to rehabilitate the Manila Bay will be a success.

He called on local government official to ensure

that once the river was cleaned, it would no longer be a dumping area for garbage and other pollutants.

"For our part, we assure you, this will not be a one-time project. We will also do continuous yearly maintenance, and the dredging equipment we have bought will not be removed here anymore," Ang added.

Bulacan Gov. Daniel Fernando expressed his gratitude to SMC and DENR, and assured their 100 percent cooperation in the project.

Ang showcased brand new dredging equipment the company bought from Japan, specifically for the project, including backhoes with barges, 55-tonner cranes, barges, tugboats, and dump trucks.

The SMC chief also addressed issues raised by groups opposed to its planned \$15-billion Manila International Airport (MIA) project, to be built in Bulakan, Bulacan, some 5 kilometers away from the site of the dredging ceremony.

The airport, envisioned as the country's largest and most modern, is being framed by opposers as a potential source of flooding in the province.

"One hundred percent, this project will not worsen flooding in Bulacan, it will

actually solve it. In the first place, foreign banks will not lend money for such major projects if they are not assured that you have addressed all environmental risks," Ang said.

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They have identified the rivers, creeks, tributaries, and bodies of water that need to be cleaned, deepened, widened and improved, to address flooding in the province.

"We will expand our dredging and clean-up operations to include these bodies of water, and provide a long-term and sustainable solution to flooding in Bulacan," he added.

Ang emphasized that the new airport, a private endeavor with no government guarantees or subsidies, can bring in as much as 30 million tourists and will create so many jobs and livelihood opportunities for Filipinos.

He added that many would benefit from the project, including the provinces of Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Pampanga.

FREDERICK SILVERIO



Tiangco lauds DENR, SMC for dredging project

By Jun David

NAVOTAS Mayor Toby Tiangco has thanked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and San Miguel Corp. for the start of a sustainable dredging program on a river that goes through the city.

"We need to have a sustainable dredging program to ensure that the success we will achieve through this will last for a long time and benefit future generations," Tiangco said in his speech during the official launch of the dredging of the Tullahan-Tinajeros river system.

The mayor noted that silt, sediments, and garbage, continue to accumulate at the bottom of rivers and other bodies of water but are not removed regularly.

"Previously, budgetary constraints hamper dredging efforts. This is why the partnership between DENR and San Miguel Corp, which has pledged P1 billion for this project, is a welcome development," he added.

Tiangco also ordered all barangay executives to strictly implement the city's anti-littering ordinance.

"Dredging efforts are futile if we allow residents to continue practicing improper waste disposal. Discipline and strict implementation are also key to achieving success in our campaign to clean up our water bodies," he stressed.

The dredging of the 36.4-kilometer Tullahan-Tinajeros river system is part of the ongoing campaign to clean up and restore the marine ecosystem of Manila Bay. The river system extends from La Mesa Dam in Quezon City to the Centennial Park in Navotas.

SMC will undertake the project in partnership with the DENR. Both SMC President and Chief Operating Officer,

Ramon S. Ang, and Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu led the launching.

Aside from Tiangco, other officials who attended the ceremony were Vice Mayor Clint Geronimo, city councilors and department heads, and barangay chairpersons.

Also present were Malabon City Mayor, Antolin A. Oreta III; Bulacan Governor, Daniel R. Fernando; 2nd and 3rd District of Bulacan Representatives, Gavini C. Pancho and Lorna C. Silverio; and Meycauyan and Obando Mayors Li-

nabelle Ruth R. Villarica and Edwin C. Santos.

Other key personalities were Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Danilo D. Lim; Department of the Interior and Local Government Undersecretary for Operations, Epimaco V. Densing III; Department of Public Works and Highways Assistant Secretary, Antonio V. Molano Jr.; and DENR Undersecretaries Rodolfo C. Garcia, Atty. Jonas R. Leones, Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, Juan Miguel T. Cuna, and Benny D. Antiporda.



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Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco joins Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Danilo D. Kim, DILG Undersecretary Epimaco V. Densing III, DPWH Assistant Sec. Antonio V. Milano Jr, DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu, Malabon I Mayor Antolin A. Oreta, and Bulacan Governor Daniel E. Fernando during the Tullahan - Tinajeros River dredging inauguration. **Jun David**



Navotas launches sustainable dredging program

By EDD REYES

NAVOTAS City Mayor Toby Tiangco thanked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and San Miguel Corp. for the start of a sustainable dredging program.

"We need to have a sustainable dredging program to ensure that the success we will achieve through this will last for a long time and benefit future generations," he said in his speech during the official launch of the dredging of Tullahan-Tinajeros river system Monday afternoon.

The mayor noted that silts and sediments, as well as garbage, continue to accumulate at the bottom of rivers and other bodies of water but are not removed regularly.

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constraints hamper dredging efforts. This is why the partnership between DENR and San Miguel Corp, which has pledged P1 billion for this project, is a welcome development," he added.

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SMC President and



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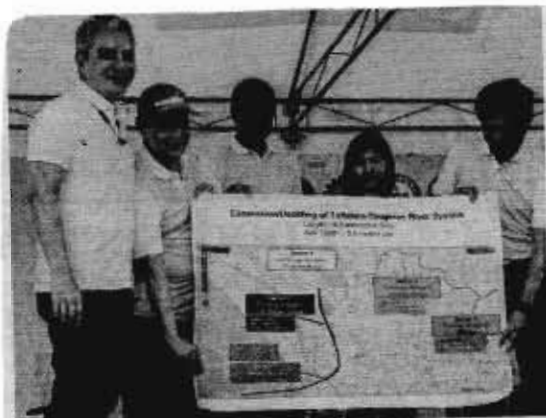
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SMC President Ramon Ang and DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu shows the desilting and excavation plan of Tulahan-Tinajeros river system together with Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco. *Photo by Edd Reyes*



TIME:

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PORMAL na inilunsad ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at ng San Miguel Corporation (SMC) ang Tullahan-Tinajeros river system dredging project na mahalagang bahagi ng Manila Bay rehabilitation program at makatutulong sa pagtugon sa pagbaha sa low-lying areas malapit sa mga ilog tulad ng lalawigan ng Bulacan. Ang SMC ay matagal nang katuwang ng DENR sa cleanup efforts nito para sa Tullahan river at nangako ng P1 billion na suporta para sa proyekto. Bumili ito ng brand-new backhoes, cranes, barges, tug boats at dump trucks at magkaloob ng manpower at logistics support. Ininspeksiyon nina DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu (ika-4 sa kaliwa) at SMC President and COO Ramon S. Ang (ikatlo sa kaliwa) ang mga bagong equipment sa Navotas, kasama sina SMC VP & Special Assistant to the President Col. Ariel Querubin, DILG Usec. Epimaco Densing, Navotas Mayor Tobias Tiangco, Majabon Mayor Antolin Oreta, MMDA Chair Danilo Lim, at Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando.



₱1-B pondo para sa dredging ng Tullahan River, aprubado na

Aprubado na ang P1 bilyon pondo para pagsisimula ng sustenableng programa sa dredging ng Tullahan at Tinejeros river system.

Ito ay matapos na magtulong ang Department Environment of Natural Resources (DENR) at ang multinational company na San Miguel Corporation, upang masimulan ang nasabing proyekto.

Dahil dito, nagpasalamat si Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco sa isasagawang rehambilaston ng Tullahan River na hindi masimulan sanhi ng kawalan ng pondo.

"Kailangan natin ang sustainable dredging program para masiguro na ang tagumpay na makakamit natin dito ay pangmatagalan at matatamasa ng mga susunod na henerasyon," aniya sa kanyang talumpati sa opisyal na paglulunsad ng dredging ng Tullahan-Tinajeros river system.

Sabi ng alkalde, patuloy na

naiipon ang mga silt at sediment, pati na ang mga basura, sa ilalim ng mga ilog at iba pang anyong-tubig pero hindi ito regular na natatanggal.

Iniutos din ni Tiangco sa mga punong barangay na mahigpit na ipatupad ang anti-littering ordinance ng lungsod.

"Mababalewala ang dredging kung hahayaan natin ang ating mga mamamayan na magtapon ng basura kung saan-saan. Ang disiplina at mahigpit na pagpapatupad ay mahalaga rin para magtagumpay tayo sa ating kampanya na linisin ang ating katubigan," dagdag pa ng alkalde.

Ang dredging ng 36.4-kilometrong Tullahan-Tinajeros river system ay bahagi ng kampanya na linisin at ayusin ang marine ecosystem ng Manila Bay.

Ang river system na ito ay mula sa La Mesa Dam, Quezon City hanggang sa Centennial Park ng Navotas.

Dumalo rin sina Malabon City Mayor, Antolin A. Oreta III; Bulacan Governor, Daniel R. Fernando; 2nd at 3rd District of Bulacan Representatives, Gavini C. Pancho at Lorna C. Silverio; at Meycauyan at Obando Mayor, Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica at Edwin C. Santos.

Kabilang din sa mga opisyal na dumalo sina Metro Manila Development Authority Chairperson, Gen. Danilo D. Lim; Department of the Interior and Local Government Undersecretary for Operations, Epimaco V. Densing III; Department of Public Works and Highways Assistant Secretary, Antonio V. Molano Jr.; at DENR Undersecretaries Rodolfo C. Garcia, Atty. Jonas R. Leones, Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, Juan Miguel T. Cuna, at Benny D. Antiporda.

Isasagawa ang proyekto sa lalong madaling panahon.

Orly L. Barcala

'Tighter rules on single-use plastics should cover manufacturers'



PLASTICS compose most of the waste at the Taytay Materials Recovery Facility in Barangay Muzon, Taytay, Rizal.

BUSINESSMIRROR FILE PHOTO

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL groups welcomed the move of the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) to impose a ban on the use of selected plastic products in all government offices, saying it will help reduce plastic pollution in the country.

Still, many of the groups believe the

NSWMC could have gone for wider coverage of the plastic ban, encompassing more single-use plastic products and beyond government offices, in issuing Resolution 1363.

They said more stringent rules in the future should include manufacturing companies that produce plastic products.

Resolution 1363 bans the use of "unnecessary" plastic products, like plastic spoon and fork, stirrer, thin plastic

cups, and plastic bags that are "certified" single-use in government offices, including national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and even government-funded facilities.

Sought for comment, Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan-PNE said: "An initial selective single-use plastics ban is a welcome move toward reducing plastic pollution in the country."

"The full transition away from single-use plastics should be fast-tracked by imposing stricter regulations and levies on manufacturing corporations to discourage their use of various other forms of plastics," Dulce added.

Greenpeace Southeast Asia, through its Philippine Country Director Lea Guerrero, said it is good that single-use plastics are finally being banned in government offices. However, she said the resolution is "low in ambition" and "borders on tokenism."

"As it is, based on reports about what is included in the resolution, it's not an actual ban on single-use plastics. They haven't banned plastic bags or plastic cups, or disposable PET bottles—just stirrers, straws and cutlery. Plastic bags and cups are allowed depending on their thickness," said Guerrero.

She said allowing thicker plastic bags and cups don't make sense. "Thicker plastic bags and cups are still disposable. Also, it would be interesting to find out how they're going

to implement it—who's going to measure the thickness of the plastic bags and cups used in government offices to see if they fit the regulation?"

Guerrero said some LGUS, supermarkets, restaurants and malls have already banned, or are in the process of banning plastic bags and cups. Since government offices don't rely on plastic bags and cups, Guerrero said it shouldn't be hard for them to do the same.

"It's disappointing that given their mandate on environmental protection, the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] and NSWMC could have aimed for much better regulation, but they didn't," she said.

Von Hernandez, Global Coordinator of Break Free From Plastic, said Resolution 1363 is "inadequate, full of loopholes, and could probably result in the use of more crappy plastic packaging nationwide."

Hernandez noted that it does not cover single-use plastic bottles and Styrofoam cups, which are among the top polluting items regularly found in the group's waste audits. Secondly, he said the policy is "practically unimplementable" because there's no designated agency that will measure the thickness of bags and cups.

"Experience in other countries has shown that this type of policy approach has resulted in the production and proliferation of more plastic bags in commerce and the environment," he said.



PLASTIC BAWAL NA SA GOV'T OFFICES

MAHIGPIT na ipinagbawal ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ang paggamit ng mga single-use plastic sa lahat ng mga opisina ng pamahalaan.

Ito ay makaraang aprubahan ng National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) ang isang resolusyon na nag-uutos sa DENR na ihanda at ipatupad ang naturang ban.

Napag-alamang sakop ng naturang ban ang national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), at lahat ng government-controlled offices.

"The NSWMC resolution is a major step to curb the use of single-use plastic items that pollute



DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu

our waterways, kill marine life and contribute to our country's increasing solid waste," pahayag ni Cimatu.

Nabatid na bunsod ng kautusan, bawal na ang paggamit sa government offices ng mga single-use plastics tulad ng cups na mas manipis sa 0.2 millimeter, drinking straws, coffee stirrers, kutsara, tinidor,

kutsilyo, "labo" at sando bags na mas mababa sa 15 microns.

Ayon pa kay Cimatu, bubuo sila ng guidelines para sa implementasyon ng plastic ban, na magiging bahagi ng solid waste avoidance at minimization strategy ng pamahalaan.

**BENEDICT
ABAYGAR, JR.**



SINGLE-USE PLASTIC, BAWAL NA SA GOV'T. OFFICES — DENR

IPINAGBABAWAL na ang paggamit ng mga single-use plastic sa lahat ng mga opisina ng pamahalaan, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ito ay matapos na aprubahan ng National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) ang resolusyon na nag-uutos sa DENR na ihanda at ipatupad ang naturang ban.

Sakop ng ban ang national government agencies, local government units (LGUs) at lahat ng mga government-controlled offices.

"The NSWMC resolution is a major step to curb the

use of single-use plastic items that pollute our waterways, kill marine life and contribute to our country's increasing solid waste," ani DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu.

Kaugnay nito, bawal na ang paggamit sa mga government offices ng mga single-use plastics tulad ng cups na mas manipis sa 0.2 millimeter, drinking straws, coffee stirrers, kutsara, tinidor, kutsilyo, "labo" at sando bags na mas mababa sa 15 microns.

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Paggamit ng single-use plastics ipinagbabawal na sa lahat ng gov't offices – DENR

IPINAGBABAWAL na sa ngayon ang paggamit ng mga single-use plastics sa lahat ng mga opisina ng pamahalaan, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

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"The NSWMC resolution is a major step to curb the use of

single-use plastic items that pollute our waterways, kill marine life and contribute to our country's increasing solid waste," ani DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu.

Dahil sa kautusan na ito, bawal na ang paggamit sa mga government offices ng mga single-use plastics tulad ng cups na mas manipis sa 0.2 millimeter, drinking straws, coffee stirrers, kutsara, tinidor, kutsilyo, "labo" at sando bags na mas mababa sa 15 microns.

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Parañaque to ban single-use plastic this June

BY MICHELLE R. GUILLANG
@tribunephil_mish

The local government of Parañaque is set to ban single-use plastic in June 2020, its Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) announced yesterday.

Through City Ordinance 18-40, plastic used for all dry goods, plastic bags, straws, spoons and forks, cups and stirrers will be prohibited in the city.

The government will also forbid the use of plates, cups, bowls and serving trays that are made of Styrofoam, according to CENRO.

However, Engr. Terence Rivera, senior environmental management specialist, clarified that CENRO officers are still in the process of identifying which specific type of plastic should be banned and which will be allowed among business establishments.

"Not all plastics will be banned; some will be regulated. It is because we cannot ban the plastics used for primary packaging like those used to pack foods," Engr. Rivera said in a one-on-one interview.

"We are planning to conduct a massive information education and communication campaign in April or May, just before the implementation of the city ordinance commences. Our staff will go around the city to educate business owners about this new policy extensively," he added.

Although this policy will be effective in June, it is only like a soft launch to give time for business establishments to adjust.

"We plan to do its strict implementation in January next year where we will apprehend and penalize those who will violate the law," he explained.

The engineer said, as of the moment, they are training their staff members to be fully knowledgeable of the policy.

"We are currently capacitating our staff members so that they can answer any questions raised to them once the policy is carried out," Rivera told.

Under the new city ordinance, the sanctions will be as follows: first offense, P5,000 penalty; second offense, P5,000 penalty; and third offense, P5,000 penalty and closure of the business establishment

A task force will be created whose members will be inspecting the compliance of business operators with the law.

"Through our waste analysis and characterization study, we found that plastics comprise a huge percentage of the total wastes in our landfills, so this really urged us to impose the policy," Rivera bared.

Community relations officer Donna Marie Manansala said they have been encouraging residents to bring their own cutlery to avoid using plastic utensils when eating outside.

"We would also like to promote the use of eco bags as an alternative of plastic bags," Manansala said.



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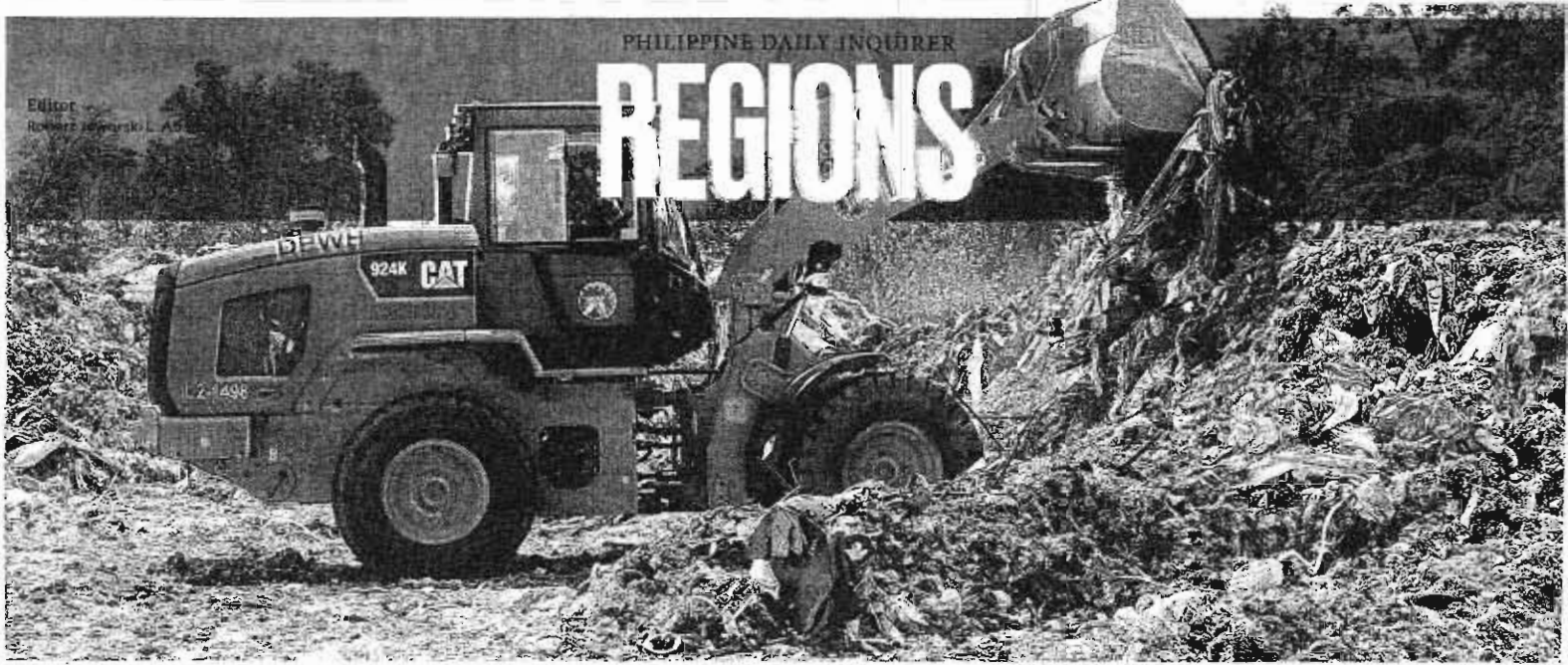
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Editor
Robert [unreadable]

DIRTY JOB A payloader operator shovels mounds of imported garbage left in a recycling facility in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental. The Bureau of Customs says the remaining volume of trash is too much for one cargo ship, prompting the agency to postpone the reshipment of waste to South Korea. —FROILAN GALLARDO



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Forest fires raze more than 65,000 trees in Benguet

By ZALDY COMANDA

BAGUIO CITY – A total of 165,620 trees and seedlings, with a total value of ₱1.6 million, was damaged from the forest fires that lasted for eight days in the more than 600-hectare natural pine forest in Kabayan, Benguet, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Cordillera reported to Office of the Civil Defense-Cordillera.

The assessed damage by the DENR included the established forest plantations under the Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP) and natural pine forest.

Affected ENGP plantations totaled 191.54 hectares with damaged/burned saplings estimated at 160,547 trees with a total value of ₱1,564,230.

The burned natural forest covered 452.15 hectares with estimated 4,973 seedlings/saplings burned/damaged with a value of ₱106,225.

The total value of damage on ENGP plantations and natural forest amounted to ₱1,670,455 from the total area burned

of 643.69 hectares. No damage to personal property was reported.

The DENR said, this forest fire was aggravated by the biophysical conditions of the area (terrains, heat exposure, wind, etc), forest fire management of concerned agencies, and the apparent indifference of the community people towards the prevention of forest fires.

A forest fire incident happened at Barangay Adaoay & Barangay Anchokey, Kabayan, Benguet on February 11. This forest fire lasted for 8 days until it was declared fire out on February 18 by the Bureau of Fire Protection – Kabayan Fire Station.

Initially, the fire started at Sitio Bulok in Barangay Adaoay, Kabayan and it spread through the areas of Barangay Anchokey Kabayan until February 17.

From the assessment of DENR, the vegetative cover of these areas are mostly grassland and pine forest located on a mountainous terrain, mostly steep to very steep slopes coupled with high exposure, making it extremely fire hazard.

BFP personnel and DENR forest protectors with the support of the community

people and volunteers responded continuously to suppress the fire.

At around 6 a.m February 18, BFP Kabayan Fire Station declared a fire out, but only after a few hours, or at around 10:04 a.m., the fire rekindled. Fire personnel immediately suppressed the fire and re-declared a fire out at 12:27 p.m.

Investigation was conducted among the community people, and it was revealed that the fire started between Sitios Sacob and Sitio Abat of Barangay Adaoay where there are grazing cows and gardens. These community livelihood activities were among the suspected causes of forest fires in the province of Benguet.

Punong Barangay Roy Tomilas, of Barangay Adaoay concluded that there was no definite perpetrator for the fire. Investigations like these unfortunately go to no avail due to lack of willing witnesses.

As a preventive measure, the Mount Pulag Park Management issued a public advisory closing the southern ingress or Akiki Trail for safety. The said trail was closed for public safety and healing.



TREKS SUSPENDED

MT. PULAG CLOSED, GIVEN TIME TO HEAL AFTER FIRE HITS BENGUET FORESTS

BAGUIO CITY—Mt. Pulag has been declared off-limits to trekkers following a fire that burned forests around it, local and environment officials said.

A popular destination for mountaineers, Mt. Pulag is Luzon's highest peak at 2,922 meters above sea level and situated

in Benguet's Kabayan town, although it straddles parts of Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya.

Kabayan Mayor Faustino Aquisan on Monday ordered the closure of Mt. Pulag on the recommendation of the association of tour guides in the area.

Emerita Albas, Mt. Pulag

National Park supervisor, said the mountain's Akiki trail had been closed since Sunday at the height of the forest fire at Barangay Eddey in Kabayan.

Albas said Mt. Pulag's closure would also allow it to heal after flames ravaged a portion near a ranger station earlier this month.

According to the Office of the Civil Defense in the Cordillera, another fire that started at Sitio Bulok in Barangay Adaoay, also in Kabayan, on Feb. 11 razed 643.69 hectares of forest land, including 160,547 trees, saplings and seedlings worth P1.6 million.

The fire, which spread to Ba-

rangay Achokey near the Lower Agno River Basin watershed, was put out on Feb. 18.

'Livelihood activities'

Fire investigators said "community livelihood activities" could have triggered the blaze.

In nearby Tublay town, a fire

that started on Feb. 19 raged for five days, destroying about 75 ha of forest in Barangay Ambassador. A four-hour forest fire also hit Barangay Baayan on Feb. 22, burning an 8-ha woodland.

Fires also hit forests in Bokod, Bakun and Kibungan towns recently. —KIMBERLIE QUITASOL INQ



800 hectares of Benguet forests ravaged by fires

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet: More than 800 hectares of forests in several towns of the province were ravaged by fires over the past several weeks.

Firefighters had difficulty in putting out the forest fires because of the absence of access roads leading to affected areas.

A report from the Bureau of Fire Protection-Cordillera Administrative Region said

the town of Kabayan suffered the biggest damage with over 600 hectares of its forests razed, followed by Tublay town with nearly 10 hectares of its forests gone.

Arson investigators said they fear that fires might also eat up other areas because of reported ongoing forest fires in the towns of Sablan, Kibungan and Bakun that have not been declared un-

der control.

According to them, prevailing strong winds will help spread the fires, making it harder for firefighters to put out the fires.

Local officials expressed concern that the forest fires might affect the growth of newly planted trees in the affected areas, setting back the government's effort to reforest existing watersheds.

The arson investigators said lighted cigarette butts unscrupulously thrown in areas where there were dried leaves and rampant *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming) could have caused the forest fires.

Raging the longest was the fire in Kabayan town that was reported to have started last February 11 and only put out last last February 23.

DEXTER A. SEE



Cordillera firemen brave forest fires

BY ALDWIN QUITASOL

BAGUIO CITY – Cordillera firefighters were busy for over a week after responding to several structural and forest fires that razed several hectares of forest lands and properties in different areas.

Personnel of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) Baguio rushed to three locations on 24 February 2020, first to suppress a forest fire in the vicinity of Maryhurst Seminary before it spread to Barangay Lucnab near the boundary of Baguio City and Itogon, Benguet.

They then proceeded to respond to a grass fire at Barangay Camp 8 in Baguio City caused by the burning of garbage by a resident, after which remaining personnel of Baguio BFP went to the neighboring municipality of Sablan, Benguet to put out a structural fire where an 11-year old boy was killed.

Meanwhile, BFP Bokod is monitoring the ongoing forest fire at Barangay Poblacion,

Bokod. The fire, which started on 18 February, proved to be difficult to put out as firefighters are having a hard time reaching the areas due to distance.

BFP Tublay of Benguet responded to a forest fire at Sitio Bawi, Baayan on 22 February 2020 at about 11:55 a.m., which burned an eight-hectare area. Fire out was declared at 4:35 p.m. with the cause of fire still undetermined.

A day earlier, another forest fire broke out at Sitio Tinuping, Barangay Eddet Kabayan, Benguet at about 12:30 a.m. Personnel of Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippine National Police, BFP and residents are still monitoring the fire, which is still ongoing, due to the inaccessibility of the area.

Firemen also rushed to put out another forest fire at Sitio Gasal, Lubo, Kibungan, Benguet on 23 February 2020 which affected the adjacent Sitio Tolibeng, where a shanty made of several GI sheets and wood was totally burned.

FIREMEN are continuously monitoring a forest fire in Bokod, Benguet which is proving to be difficult to put out given the remoteness of the area.

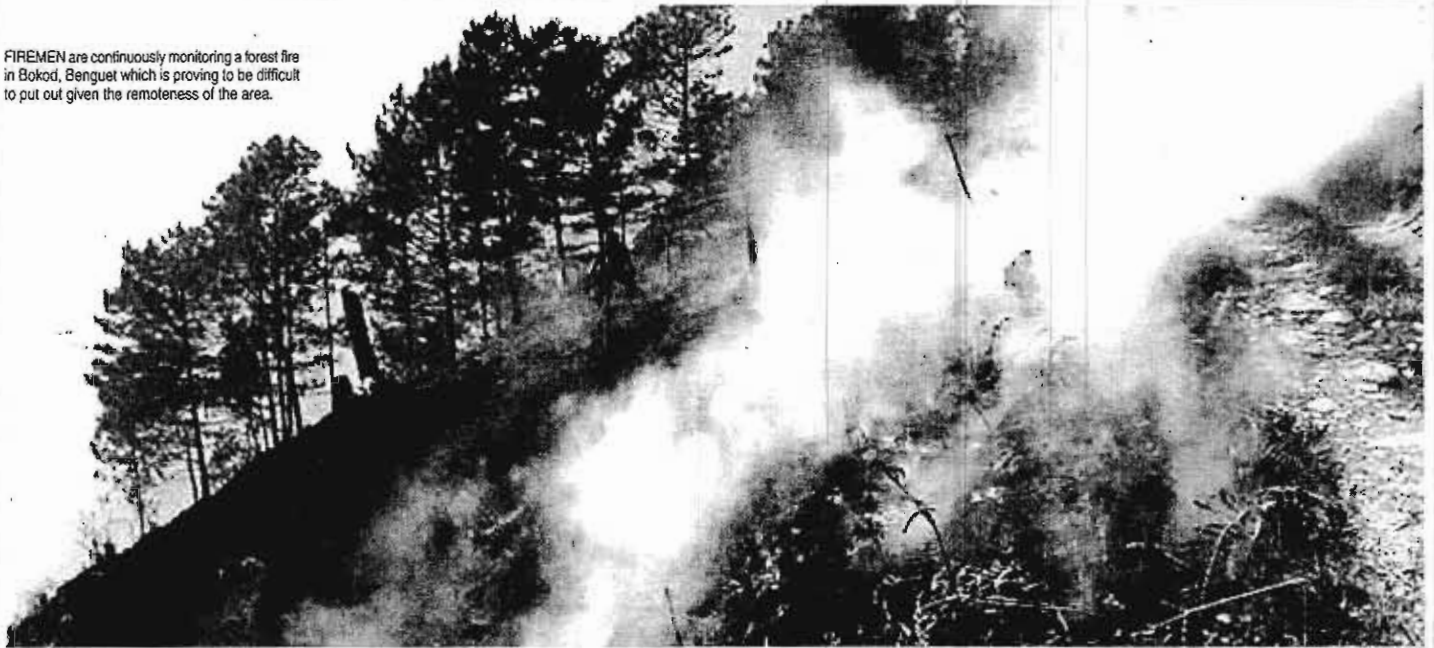


PHOTO COURTESY OF BFP BOKOD



₱1.6M pinsala sa forest fires sa Kabayan, Benguet

BAGUIO CITY - May kabuuang 165,620 trees at seedlings/ saplings ang nilamon ng apoy na umaabot sa halagang P1.6 milyon sa naganap na 8 araw na forest fire sa mahigit sa 600 ektaryang natural Pine forest sa bayan ng Kabayan, Benguet, ayon sa ipinadalang report ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera.

Sa assessed damages report ng DENR ay direktang napinsala ang itinayong forest plantation sa ilalim ng Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP) at maraming bahagi ng natural pine forest.

May kabuuang 191.54 ektarya ng ENGP plantation, na natataniman ng 160,547 trees sapling na may halagang P1,564,230 ang totally burned, samantalang sa natural forest na may 452.15 hectares na may 4,973 seedlings/ saplings, na may halagang P106,225 ang nasunog.

Ang forest fire incident ay naganap sa Barangay Adaoay at Barangay Anchokey, Kabayan, Benguet noong Pebrero 11, na nagtagal ng walong araw hanggang sa madeklarang fire-out noong Pebrero 18.

Sa imbestigasyon, ang sunog ay nagsimula sa mabundok na bahagi ng Sitio Bulok, Barangay Adaoay at kumalat ito sa Barangay Anchokey hanggang Pebrero 17.

Nag-respond ang mga BFP personnel, DENR forest protectors, at volunteers sa patuloy na pagkalat ng apoy sa lugar. Dakong alas 6:00 ng umaga ng Pebrero 18 ng ideklara ang fire-out, subalit makalipas ang ilang oras ay muling sumiklab ang apoy, kaya muling rumesponde ang mga bumbero at idineklarang fire-out dakong 12:27 ng hapon.

Dahil dito, isinara ng Mt. Pulag Park Management ang trekking activities sa bahagi ng Akiki trail na sakop ng Kabayan para sa seguridad ng publiko at turista mula Pebrero 24.

Kaugnay nito, iniutos ni Kabayan Mayor Faustino Aquisan sa pulisya na magsagawa ng masusing imbestigasyon kung sino ang may kagagawan ng sunog sa dahilang may posibilidad na ginawa umano ito para gawing vegetable farm ang naturang lugar.

Zaldy Comanda



Dahil sa bushfire MOUNT PULAG NAKA-LOCKDOWN

BENGUET - NAKA-LOCKDOWN ngayon ang Mount Pulag matapos ang halos isang linggong sunog sa gubat na bahagi ng Kabayan.

Ayon kay Kabayan Mayor Faustino Aquisan, isinara ito kasunod na rin ng rekomendasyon ng Mt. Pulag Guides Asso-

ciation.

Sinabi naman ni Mt. Pulag National Park supervisor Emerita Albas na isinara na rin ang Akiki Trail simula noong araw ng Linggo, Pebrero 23, kasunod ng forest fire.

Umabot sa 643 hectares ng grassland at pine

forests ang napinsala bunsod ng sunog.

Samantala, binalaan din ang ilang barangay official sa lugar at awtoridad na maging magmatiyag sa nasabing kabundukan upang magpigilan ang muling pagkasunog ng kakahuyan doon.

PMRT



FILE:

ANDITO na ulit ang tag-araw, ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Mabilis nang nawa-wala ang lamig sa paligid at nagsisimulang uminit kahit saan.

Ramdam na ramdam na ang init ng panahon at natatalo na ang lamig.

Habang nagaganap ito, naisip naman natin ang sunog.

Marso ang buwan ng pag-alaala sa pagpigil at pakikipaglapan sa sunog.

Fire Prevention Month, 'ika nga.

SUNOG SA BENGUET

Tila hindi maganda ang simula ng tag-araw dahil may naitatala nang mga sunog na hindi basta maapula.

Halimbawa ang mga butubunduking bahagi ng tatlong bayan sa Benguet na nasusunog ngayon.

May mga isinara nang mga daanan patungong Mt. Pulag dahil nasusunog ang mga ito.

Ang Mt. Pulag ay dinarayong ng mga lokal at dayuhang turista dahil napakaganda nito.

Hindi lang mga pananim ang nasisira kundi mismong ang pinagkakakitaang turismo ang apektado.

Sana naman, hindi matulad ang sunog sa Benguet sa sunog sa Australia kamakailan na kumitil ng maraming buhay, milyong buhay ng mga hayop, tumupok sa maraming tahanan at sumira sa kabuhayan na rin ng daang libong mamamayan, kasama ang maraming Filipino na naninirahan doon.

BRGY. FIRE BRIGADE

Nasaan na ang mga Brgy. Fire Brigade?

Hinahanap natin ang mga ito dahil sila ang unang tinatawagan ng mga mamamayan sa oras ng sunog.

Ang totoo, nakikita ng ULTIMATUM kung paano kumukuha mismo ang pamahalaang barangay ng mga fire hydrant laban sunog na may kemikal.

Meron ding pamahalaang barangay na may sariling fire truck, kasama ang mga mini-fire truck.

Meron ding mga pagsasanay ang mga ito laban sa sunog.

At magandang tingnan ang kanilang ginagawa.

Maliban diyan, halos mga volunteer sina kapitan, kagawad, Sangguniang Kabataan chairman at kagawad niya,



ULTIMATUM NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

SUNOG, WALANG TUBIG DAHIL SA MONOPOLYO

iba pang opisyal ng barangay at mga tanod.

Pero andiyan lang sila at handang umalalay.

WALANG LABAN

Pero meron ding mga barangay na wala ni anomang sa mga nabanggit natin sa itaas at nagdedepende lang sila sa awa ng mga Chinese-Filipino volunteer firemen at sa Bureau of Fire Prevention ng gobyerno.

Paano nga naman magkaroon ng sapat na pondo ang isang barangay kung pawang mga residential o agricultural ang sakop nito at pawang mga ordinaryong mamamayan ang nakapaligid at botante?

Ito ang mga barangay na may pinakamababang bahagi sa Internal Revenue Allotment at nabubuhay lang dito.

Kung walang IRA, patay ang barangay dahil wala itong sapat na pondo.

Pero maganda pa rin kung may Brgy. Fire Brigade ang mga ito at lilikha ng mga pagkukunan ng tubig gaya ng mga drum na pupwedeng pagsalukan ng panlaban sa maliit na sunog.

Alalahaning nagsisimula sa maliit ang malaking sunog.

Bago dumating ang mga fire volunteer at fire fighter ng pamahalaan, kahit papaano, nakagagawa na sana ng pagpigil sa apoy, kahit gaano kahina, ang mga fire brigade.

WALANG TUBIG

Water rotation, sabi ng Maynilad at Manila Water ang nagaganap na close-open na linya ng tubig sa Metro Manila ngayon.

Aba nakatatakot ito.

Sa usapin ng sunog, walang magagawa ang mga barangay brigade kung wala silang mapagkukunan ng tubig.

Kung nagaganap ang sunog na walang tubig sa oras ng water rotation.

Lalong lalala ang sitwasyong ito, mga Bro, sa panahong malawakan at matagalan na ang kawalan ng tubig.

Hindi na nating kailangang magpaliwanag dito dahil nararanasan natin ito taon-taon.

Nito nga lang nakaraang taon, anak ng tokwa, ilang araw nawa-walan ng tubig ang maraming parte ng Metro

Manila.

Paano ang sunog sa mga ito?

KULANG SA SUPLAY

Sa tantiya ng ating Uzi, mga Bro, hindi ganong kukulangin ang suplay ng tubig, maging ang mga fire hydrant, ang Metro Manila kung hanggang dito lang ang sinasakop ng Maynilad at Manila Water.

Ang problema, gusto na nilang lamunin para suplayan ng tubig ang mga lalawigan gaya ng Rizal, Laguna at Cavite at pati Bulacan ay pinupuntirya ng mga ito.

Sabi ng ating Uzi, anyo ito ng kasuwapan ng mga negosyante sa tubig.

Gusto nilang saku-pin ang lahat at kasabay nito ang pagbabawal nila na magkaroon ng sariling source ng tubig ang mamamayan para masolo nila ang lahat.

Bawat patak ng tubig, pera ang pagtingin ng mga ito.

Pero nagbubunga naman lahat ito ng krisis sa water supply.

Tapos sasabihin nila na kulang ang pinagkukunan nila ng tubig gaya ng Angat Dam.

MAGTIPID

Heto ngayon tayo at sinasabi nilang magtipid tayo ng husto.

Tama naman.

Hindi tayo dapat magaksaya ng tubig.

Ang mga sirang faucet at tubo, dapat nating ayusin.

Huwag ding nakawin ang suplay ng tubig sa mga fire hydrant.

Nasabi natin ito dahil inaangkin ng kung sino-sino ang mga fire hydrant, ginagawan ng kubo at tinatakpan para sa negosyo nila sa tubig at pansariling garnit.

Pero dapat na magisip nang husto ang pamahalaan upang kontrolin ang mga monopolyo sa tubig na ang mga ginagawang expansion program ang dahilan ng water supply na pumaparalisa maging sa mga bumpero na lumalaban sa sunog.

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



Senate investigation urged into water situation after decline in Angat supply

A SENATOR is calling for an investigation into the government's readiness to deal with the decreasing levels of water in Angat Dam in Bulacan, the main source of Metro Manila's water, following shortages in various parts of the capital.

In a statement Tuesday, Senator Emmanuel Joel J. Villanueva said he filed Senate Resolution No. 329 "to avert the negative effects of the anticipated water shortage in the summer months."

Water shortages began to manifest earlier this year when Angat Dam's water level fell below critical, as did La Mesa Dam in Quezon City, a key reservoir for Angat water. The shortages led

to the imposition of rationing throughout the region and nearby provinces.

"Our experience last year shows that Metro Manila has inadequate water supply. Our regulator and concessionaires should be able to respond to this upcoming problem," Villanueva said.

Mr. Villanueva said that the water level in Angat Dam has dipped below 212 meters, which is considered optimal. As of Tuesday, the water level was 202.23 meters, according to the government weather service, which is known as PAGASA.

Angat Dam supplies most of the water treated by the two Metro Manila concessionaires — Maynilad Water Services, Inc.

(Maynilad) and Manila Water Co. (Manila Water). Manila Water is allocated 1,600 million liters per day (MLD) while Maynilad gets 2,400 MLD.

Manila Water said in August that the chronic water shortages could turn critical by 2021 if the government does not tap a new water source. The government's solution to the ongoing water crisis is the construction of the Kaliwa Dam in Quezon and Rizal.

Earlier this year, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Emmanuel B. Salamat said Kaliwa is still in the design phase with a target completion of 2024 or 2025. — Gillian M. Cortez



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Kahandaan ng gobyerno sa water shortage sisipatin ng Senado

NAGHAIN si Senador Joel Villaneuva ng isang resolusyon na naglalayong siyasin ang kahandaan ng pamahalaan na matugunan ang inaasahang kakapusan sa suplay ng tubig ngayong summer.

Sa Senate Resolution 329, sinabi ni Villaneuva na nais niyang malaman ang update kaugnay ng mga pipeline project ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) kabilang ang Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Project, Kaliwa Dam, Ipo Dam 3 Project at iba pa.

"We need to closely monitor the national water programs, activities, and projects being implemented

and undertaken by the government," ani Villaneuva.

Ayon sa senador, kailangang mapaghandaan ito ng gobyerno para hindi na muling makaranas ang mga residente ng Metro Manila ng water crisis tulad ng nangyari noong nagdaang taon.

"It's almost a year since the shortage happened so we're expecting that the MWSS and its two concessionaires are better prepared this time," sabi ni Villaneuva.

Ang tinutukoy niya ay Manila Water na nagseserbisyo sa east zone ng Metro Manila at Maynilad naman sa west zone at Greater Manila Area.

"Our experience last year shows that Metro Manila has an inadequate water supply. Our regulator and concessionaires should be able to respond to this upcoming problem," sabi ng senador.

Kahapon, inihayag ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration na nasa 202.23 meter ang water level sa Angat Dam, ang source ng tubig para sa Metro Manila, na angat pa sa critical level na 180 meter.

"This is especially more so considering that Angat Dam has not reached its ideal level of 212 meters," ani Villaneuva. **(Dindo Matining)**



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Water conservation

Remember last year's water shortage? While additional water treatment plants

and storage facilities have been installed by the water concessionaires in Metro Manila, the state weather bureau is urging the public to start practicing water conservation as the dry season approaches.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration warned over the weekend that the water level in Angat Dam, the main source of water for Metro Manila, was at 202.08 meters – below the normal operating level of 210 meters and normal high of 212. Last year, PAGASA had warned of low water supply due to an El Niño episode from 2018 until mid-2019.

On June 29 last year, the water in Angat fell below its critical level of 157.96 meters. Water supply for irrigation and power generation at the dam is suspended when the level falls below 180 meters. In Metro Manila, east zone concessionaire Manila Water began rationing water and had to cut off supply in several areas for days

EDITORIAL

on end. Maynilad shared water from the west zone to ease the crisis in the east

sector, and the entire Metro Manila eventually felt the water shortage.

While PAGASA says it does not see a similar acute water shortage this summer, it is also urging people to start preparing for low water supply. Apart from storing water for large-scale consumption such as irrigation, the public is being urged to be mindful of practices that promote the efficient utilization of water.

The approach of the dry season should also lead to intensified efforts to develop and install water recycling systems especially in industrial operations. The required initial investment may be significant, but it can be cost-effective in the long term for offices, industries and building owners to install water recycling systems.

As the global population continues to grow, putting a strain on limited resources, fresh water supply is increasingly becoming a problem around the planet. It's never too early to develop mitigation measures and improve water management.



Filipinos breathing dirty, unsafe air—report

By **Jhesset O. Enano**
@JhessetEnanoINQ

While the Philippines has ranked lowest among Southeast Asian countries for the concentration of particulate matter (PM), its levels still showed that Filipinos are breathing dirty and unsafe air, according to a recently released report on air quality worldwide.

The country's annual mean for PM2.5—a pollutant widely regarded as most harmful to human health—was pegged at 17 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m3) last year.

This was higher than the safe level set by the World Health Organization (WHO), which placed the exposure threshold at 10 ug/m3.

Data published in the 2019 World Air Quality Report, compiled by Swiss-based company IQAir, were sourced from ground-based monitoring stations across the globe.

The report said that new datasets showed elevated air pollution levels globally due to climate change events, such as wildfires and sandstorms, as

well as pollution from the rapid urbanization in regions such as Southeast Asia.

In this region, none of the nine countries managed to lower their PM2.5 levels to the safe standard set by the WHO.

Indonesia tops the list, with an annual mean of 51.7 ug/m3, followed by Vietnam (34.1 ug/m3) and Myanmar (31 ug/m3).

Most polluted capitals

For the first time, the cities of Jakarta and Hanoi overtook Beijing as among the world's most PM2.5 polluted capitals.

"While the new coronavirus is dominating international headlines, a silent killer is contributing to nearly 7 million more deaths a year: air pollution," said Frank Hammes, IQAir chief executive officer, in a statement.

Globally, the Philippines ranked 57th out of 98 countries in terms of average PM2.5 concentration last year.

But last year's levels were higher than 2018, where it was pegged at 14.6 ug/m3.

Compared to other particles in the air, these tiny pol-

lutants are considered deadlier as they can easily travel deep into the respiratory tract.

Environment groups said the excessive pollutant levels shown in the report underscored the need for urgent steps to address the quality of air in the country.

They said the numbers in the report reflected only data from existing monitoring stations, therefore only providing a "small snapshot" of the actual threat of air pollution.

"Monitoring air quality has been a perennial challenge," said Gia Ibay, climate and energy program head of World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines.

"With the Philippine Clean Air Act and the standards contained therein being more than 20 years old, [this report] should instead bolster the urgent need to improve our air quality monitoring systems, update our air quality standards and ensure that these are properly implemented," she added.

While the report also listed four Philippine cities as among

the cleanest in Southeast Asia, the groups said further studies must be made in order to verify these numbers.

These cities include Calamba in Laguna province, which ranked first out of 15 cities; Carmona in Cavite (3rd); Legazpi in Albay (10th); and Balanga in Bataan (11th).

Monitoring devices needed

"Since last year, we have not seen an increase in air quality monitoring in these areas," said Khevin Yu of Greenpeace Philippines, noting that in Calamba, only one monitoring station was installed for the entire city.

"We need local governments and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to provide more monitoring devices to verify these findings and to enable us to address the root cause of air pollution more effectively," Yu added.

In a similar report showing the pollutant levels for 2018, Calamba also topped the list of regional cities with cleanest air. Ten other Philippine cities, including seven in Metro Manila, were also included. INQ



Green groups want improved air quality in PH

By Willie Casas

AIR pollution is a silent killer in the Philippines, and the government must take urgent steps to address the problem before it gets worse, according to environmental groups calling for action to improve air quality in the Philippines.

Environmental, science and health groups on Tuesday raised the alarm following recent reports on poor air quality in the country.

A global report launched this week showed that air quality in the Philippines contains PM2.5 pollution levels that significantly exceed the safety limits prescribed by the World Health Organization.

The groups—Greenpeace Philippines, Clean Air Asia, Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED), Health Care without Harm, the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PM CJ), and the World Wide Fund for

Nature (WWF) Philippines—also called on the Philippine government to revamp and improve current air pollution monitoring systems in order to provide more reliable information on whether the air in our communities is still safe for daily living.

According to them, the recent 2019 Air Visual report places the Philippines in the 58th spot out of 98 countries with locations from where air quality data was collected.

But the groups emphasize that while available Air Visual data did not place the Philippines as among the countries with the worst air quality, the data nevertheless shows that the country still has very polluted air.

Year-on-year data also shows that the country's air quality is getting worse. Average PM2.5 pollution levels in Air Visual sites increased from 14.6 µg/m3 (micrograms per cubic meter) in 2018 to 17.6 µg/m3 in 2019. The safety limit set by the WHO is 10 µg/m3.

The groups also noted that the report only looks at PM2.5 pollution, and does not include other pollutants such as sulfur oxide, nitrous oxide, ozone and other contaminants that carry deleterious health risks.

A report released by Greenpeace Philippines earlier this month showed that these and other toxic emissions can cost Filipinos as much as 1.9 percent GDP loss and 27,000 premature deaths.

The groups are calling for better air pollution standards in the Philippines, including improved monitoring, transparency and analysis. In the case of the 2019 Air Visual report, the quantity and placement of air monitors from which data were collected provide only a small snapshot of the threat of PM 2.5 air pollution.

To be effective, the groups say that the government should monitor places close to main sources of air pollution, such as coal-fired power plants and high traffic areas of motorized vehicles.



'Twin land-reclamation projects to complement Sangley airport devt'

THE proposed twin land-reclamation projects of Bacoor City in the Province of Cavite could provide the needed additional space and features congruent with the Sangley Point International Airport (SPIA).

This was stressed by the Bacoor LGU in a statement, saying no less than the Provincial Government of Cavite, the proponent of SPIA, stressed that additional land-reclamation projects other than the SPIA development are necessary.

"In fact, the Sangley Point has been shown to be the most feasible area for the airport-seaport complex with enabling reclamation component. With this, it is necessary for Cavite to provide large parcels of land to accommodate the envisioned developmental growth," the Bacoor LGU quoted the Provincial Government of Cavite in its application for environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the proposed, 1,331-hectare Cavite Reclamation Project (CRP).

Last month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the LGU of Bacoor, Cavite, the proponent of the project, resumed public hearings for the proposed 320-hectare Bacoor Reclamation and Development Project, and proposed 100-hectare Diamond Reclamation and Development Project.

Despite their promised benefits, the twin land-reclamation projects are being strongly opposed by residents of the coastal barangays who stand to lose their homes and livelihood.

On Monday, the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) held the Climate Strike to demand for climate action from the Duterte

administration.

During the event, protesters raised the alarm over the recent study of the US-based science research organization Climate Central's warning that within 30 years, around 8 million residents in Metro Manila would likely be submerged by the projected sea rise of about 2-7 feet, and possibly more.

They said this will be further aggravated by massive land reclamation, and repeated their call to the Duterte administration to stop all development projects related to land reclamation, also called dump-and-fill that destroys coastal and marine ecosystems like mangroves, seagrass beds and corals.

Joining the strike were members of the alliance Koalisyon Kontra Kumbersyon at Reklamasyon (KKKR). The reclamation projects along the Manila Bay "will not only affect the integrity of the Philippine marine and coastal ecosystems, but would also result [in] massive dislocation of fishing communities and make them more vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change," they said.

Many residents in the Bacoor City's coastal barangays still rely on fishing and farming oyster and mussel.

Bacoor City is strategically located, less than 30 kilometers away from Sangley and just 20 km away from Naia, and would provide an ideal location for the planned road connectors to both airports.

With a mixed-use development that includes residential, commercial, hotel and recreation, tourism, as well as a Science Park, the Bacoor reclamation projects would be able to accommodate a large portion of the foreign arrivals at SPIA.

SEE "SANGLEY," A2

Sangley. . .

CONTINUED FROM A8

In addition, the Bacoor reclamation projects are also meant to attract investments and new businesses, both foreign and local, whose operations would involve shipment of goods and travel of personnel utilizing either SPIA or the Naia.

Bacoor City leaders believe the proposed reclamation project would propel the city's rise as a new growth center adjacent to Metro Manila, generate at least 700,000 new jobs for its residents and those in nearby areas, and enable the city government to improve the delivery of basic

services for its people.

The reclamation projects are being pushed to provide additional land space necessary for new developments and accommodate the projected growth of the city's population of around 600,000—seen to double by 2025. As of today, at least 73 percent of the city's land area is devoted to residential use.

Bacoor leaders said the project will also hasten the Manila Bay cleanup drive in compliance with the 2008 mandamus of the Supreme Court with the in-city relocation of ISFs who are at risk in coastal areas. ISFs will be relocated at "Ciudad Kaunlaran in Molino II, while affected families of fishermen will be resettled at the "Fisherman's Village" in Barangay Alima. **Jonathan L. Mayuga**



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Gov't now spending millions to promote responsible mining

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR

Three years ago, under the leadership of former Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez, Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) was leading the crackdown in the mining sector. Today, it is spending millions to promote it.

In a statement, it was revealed that MGB, the government agency tasked to regulate the highly controversial extractive industries, had spent as much as P9 million to launch its massive information campaign to promote sustainable and responsible mining last year.

The spending covered conceptualization, creation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) print materials, social media account management and content, production of TV commercial, online advertisement, and documentary outputs, as well as the actual launch

itself.

Such move of MGB is in stark contrast to its decisions in 2017 when it would rather spend its budget to run after mining companies.

Back when Lopez was still the Environment Secretary, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), MGB's lead agency, spent millions for an audit on mining companies, which almost shutdown half of the country's nickel operators, including the major ones.

Things have changed in 2017 when Lopez, who passed away in August last year, was replaced by Environment Secretary Cimatú, a development that gave miners a glimmer of hope.

Meanwhile, MGB said that miners are now supporting its massive responsible mining campaign and have even pledged to contribute to it.

"Mining companies are willing

to allot a portion of information, education and communication (IEC) and development of mining technology and geosciences (DMTG) component from their Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) for this endeavor," MGB said.

As of September 2018, a data from MGB showed that mining companies have committed to spend P39.74 billion in total for their plans and programs related to sustainable development and environmental protection/rehabilitation.

The amount included the compa-

nies' budget for SDMP, Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program (EPEP), and Final Mine Rehabilitation, Decommissioning Plan (FMR/DP).

The SDMP is a tool for the development and implementation of community programs, projects and activities for the host and neighboring communities of a mining project/area.

This is a five-year plan geared towards the development of responsible, self-reliant and resource-based communities capable of developing, implementing and managing development programs, projects and activities.



PH banks urged to stop funding coal plants

By MYRNA M. VELASCO

While many offshore banks have already decided to stop funding new coal-fired power projects, the story in the Philippine energy sector is quite the reverse, hence, church leaders and civil society groups have been urging the country's financial sector to heed the direction being pursued by their global counterparts.

The anti-coal groups indicated that this call is anchored on "coal power's detrimental impact to the people and the environment."

Their plea to the Philippine banks had been articulated during the launch of the Church-CSO Empowerment for Environmental Sustainability (ECO-CONVERGENCE), which was a gathering of faith-based congregations and environmental advocates from all over Visayas island as well as from the national organizations.

A joint statement they issued stipulated that "the church, civil society orga-

nizations and advocates of clean energy gather to uphold the care of our people and our common home by urging Philippine banks still funding coal to cut off the funds."

Coal had always been given the "dirty fuel" tag, but the Philippine energy mix policy is not keen on pulling the plug yet even for the anticipated new power plant installations.

The Philippine banks are not also showing any signs that they will stop financing coal plant projects soon – especially with forecasts that the country's power supply-demand curve will be intersecting again by year 2022. Even this year, the biggest power grid of Luzon is also strained, especially during the summer months.

The church and civil society leaders have noted that at least 13 local banks have underwritten about US\$6.303 billion worth of coal plant expansion ventures from years 2017 to 2019 – including some currently completed power projects in the Visayas.



MASAlamin

ni Ed Cordevilla

16TH GAWAD TANGLAW BEST
NEWSPAPER OPINION COLUMNIST

MAY ligalig sa kalikasan. Ang mga ibon ay umaawit ng may pagmamadali. Animo mayroong gumagambala sa kanilang matahimik na pamumuhay. Maging ang mga aso'y animo'y mga ulol na nag-aaway hanggang magkaduguan. Ang mga langgam ay kulo-kulompol na nagsisipagtago.

Kara-karaka'y may mga ipo-ipong nabubuo sa mga bukas na hangganan, ang init ng araw ay may kurot sa balat, ang lamig naman sa gabi at madaling-araw ay kumukubkob sa kaluluwa.

May ilang tao ang pumupulandit na lamang ng pag-awit, may ilan ding nangaiipon sa sulok-sulok ng siyudad na may ibayong kagutuman sa mga mata.

Banaag ang lupit sa mga naghahari-harian, mga nabubuhay naman sa suweldo ay kinukuyom ang isang dakot na pag-asa. May

mga naglalakas-loob na maghanapbuhay nang patago, pinasisidhi ang tapang ng kumakalam na sikmura.

Sa ibang bayan ay dumadagundong ang niyebeng lumalamon sa mga kalupaan, mga balayenang nagpapadausdos na lamang sa mga dalampasigan hanggang bawian ng buhay. Mga bungang bubot pa ay nangasisipaglaglagan at mga bubuyog nagkakawalaan.

Maraming manunulat ay pinagdadamutan na ng salita, ang mga nunong tagapagsasal ay nakatutok na sa balsa. Winawala na rin ang karangalan sa mga medalya, mga balita ay sapataha na lamang.

Ang maliliit na bayrus ay nagpapatumba na ng mga siyudad, ang bulkan ay ngingisi-ngisi na lamang. Ang mga buwitre ng lipunan ay nagliliparan, sa himpawid sila ay nakama-

LIGALIG SA KALIKASAN

ta sa mga anghel ng kamatayan.

Ang tubig ay darating-hindi, ang ilaw ay kukurap-kurap. Ang mga basura ay pilit itinatago sa ilalim ng lupa at

tinatakpan ng mapanlinglang na ngiti.

Ang mga demonyo ay nagtanggap na ng kanilang mga maskara, at ang mga nag-iisip ay naligaw na sa bungo

nila.

May isang langgam akong nasumpungan, binigyan ko ng isang butil ng asukal, ngunit mas piniling magpakalunod sa tilamsik ng plema.



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Climate change could pose 'catastrophic' threat to global security, experts warn

NEW YORK (Thomson Reuters Foundation) – Climate change could become a "catastrophic" threat to global **▶6**

Climate change could... **1◀**

security, as people lose their livelihoods, fall ill, and battle over scarce water and food, a host of US security, military and intelligence experts warned on Monday.

Pressures from global warming could intensify political tensions, unrest and conflict, fuel violent extremism and break down government security systems, the experts said in a report by the Center of Climate and Security, a nonpartisan policy institute.

War-torn countries in Africa and the Middle East were cited as most at risk, but industrialized regions are vulnerable, it said.

"Even at scenarios of low warming, each region of the world will face severe risks to national and global security in the next three decades," the report said.

"Higher levels of warming will pose catastrophic, and likely irreversible, global security risks over the course of the 21st century."

Concerns over the impact of climate change have led to calls to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow the pace of global warming amid instances of climate-related extreme weather such as wildfires and floods.

A United Nations report last year warned of dire consequences as well.

The research released on Monday warned of displaced populations driven from their homes by rising heat, drought and dwindling water and food supplies.

Disease would spread, and border security and infrastructure would break down as resources grow more scarce, fueling extremism, crime and human trafficking, it said.



Mobilizing Public-Private stewardship of the environment

Government, industries, and civil society organizations are finding different ways to approach plastic waste pollution. Legislative measures, such as a nationwide ban on single-use plastics, adoption of waste-to-energy plants, extended producers' responsibility, and private sectors' proactive engagement with communities and local government units are at the core of this discussion.

It is sobering that stakeholders are beginning to recognize the role they have to play as part of the solution. Whilst a tough process, something needs to be done, and it is never without asking, where do we start?

The broad-based multi-stakeholder approach is essential to effectively integrate a circular economy in rethinking production processes and in modern-

izing our waste management processes. The economic and technological realities show that a nationwide ban does not make the most sense in plastic waste management. A holistic approach wherein all regulatory schemes will mobilize the cooperation of public and private sectors is the more sensible and viable direction rather than extreme policies that will only burden consumers with higher prices.

Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 itself encourages greater private sector participation in solid waste management. Even as Metro Manila coagulates further, urban and environmental challenges are too daunting and complex to be taken on separately. Shared responsibilities in caring for the environment through proper waste management efforts should be encouraged and mandated.

Simply put, government cannot do everything on its own.

Big industry leaders and environmental advocacy groups were on the same page in the recent Stratbase Pilipinas Conference and aligned their commitments to help solve what the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu sees as a "garbage crisis" that must be solved to clean up Manila Bay.

In fact, collaborative programs with the private sector and communities, even in waste management, are not unheard of. Big companies are now partnering with government agencies to rehabilitate the most polluted rivers in Metro Manila. There are ongoing partnerships with communities and local government units to incentivize recovery of wastes and augment leakage that glaringly start off from the collection system.



A SHOWCASE of decor made from recycled plastic.

ENV FILE PHOTO



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THINKING BEYOND POLITICS VANESSA PEPINO

The economic and technological realities show that a nationwide ban does not make the most sense in plastic waste management. A holistic approach wherein all regulatory schemes will mobilize the cooperation of public and private sectors is the more sensible and viable direction rather than extreme policies that will only burden consumers with higher prices.

Among the notable private sector initiatives is Coca-Cola Philippines' P1-billion RPET (recycled polyethylene terephthalate) facility investment, the first in the Asia Pacific region, and slated to break ground this year. The technology will give PET bottles extended and multiple lives as RPET bottles, fabrics, chairs, and other useful items, thereby catching thousands of tons a day in PET bottles that would have ended up in landfills, illegal dumpsites, and *esteros* (canals) flowing to Manila Bay.

This is under the company's World Without Waste global program which already has various ongoing sustainability and waste management programs in Iloilo, Bacolod, Boracay, Davao, Siargao, Palawan, Cavite, Bataan, Marinduque, Albay, Davao, Metro Manila, La Union, Baler, Negros Occidental and Saranggani, among others.

Innovations in packaging will take some time but the multinational manufacturing countries are investing in what can be done now to help stop the dumping of thousands of tons of trash ending up in our waterways. Manufacturers us-

ing sachet packaging such as Unilever for one have post-consumer waste collection programs in over 300 communities in Metro-Manila through a product exchange incentive. Its "Zero Waste" programs are engaged in multi-sectoral partnerships to implement micro-level collection projects. More and more enterprises see the value of responsive corporate citizenship and the role they must play as an enabling stakeholder of the environment which should be rigorously encouraged and even incentivized by government.

Building the best waste management systems takes resources, right planning and execution, but addressing public apathy, the lack of motivation and discipline to individually participate in reducing waste may be the more challenging dimension of our garbage problem. A strong communications campaign that aims to transform the "throw away" habit into a "dispose your trash properly" culture is a key component that the private sector's pool of creative communicators will be most valuable.

Public or private-led programs on environmental stewardship and community empowerment are all invaluable in plastic waste management. It sets a new wave of strategies on how community-based projects can be more inclusive and impactful as they are connected to institutionalized funding schemes.

That said, empowering communities and enforcing environmental regulations work best when shared responsibility is upheld and encouraged. It works best when private partners are engaged and included as much as local governments and communities are held accountable.

It may be ambitious by a long shot, but it is possible and most of all, it works. ■

VANESSA PEPINO is a Non-Resident Fellow at the Stratbase ADR Institute.



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A man prepares his farm for the next planting season in Tuba, Benguet over the weekend.

ANDY ZAPATA JR.