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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



SMC: Tullahan dredging to address Bulacan flooding, Manila Bay rehab

SAN MIGUEL Corporation's (SMC's) P1-billion initiative to dredge and expand the Tullahan river system will not only give the Manila Bay rehabilitation project a major boost, but also help solve flooding in Bulacan. This paves the way for building the country's largest and most modern airport in the province.

Dubbed the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System dredging project, the project was launched yesterday by SMC and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) 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 Manila Bay.

Keeping the river pollution-free, SMC President and Chief Operating Officer Ramon Ang said, is critical to ensuring that the DENR's efforts to rehabilitate the

Manila Bay under Secretary Roy Cimatu, will be a success.

At the event, Ang showcased new dredging equipment the company bought from Japan, specifically for the project.

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.

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.

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 create many livelihood opportunities for Filipinos.



SMC: Pagbaha sa Bulacan huhupa sa P1B Tullahan river rehab

Hindi lang makabubuti para sa reabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ang P1 bilyong Tullahan river project ng San Miguel Corporation (SMC) kundi malaki rin ang maitutulong nito upang malunasan ang mga pagbaha sa lalawigan ng Bulacan.

Tinawag na Tullahan-Tinajeros River System dredging project, inilunsad ito kamakailan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at SMC kasama ang mga local executive sa Navotas, Malabon, Valenzuela at Bulacan.

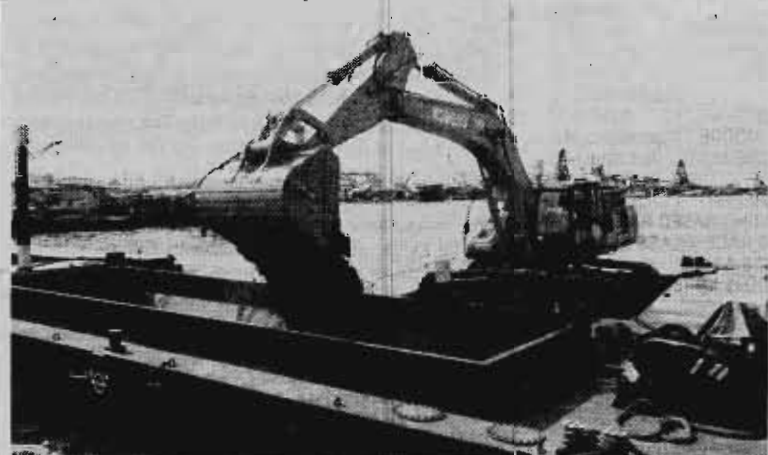
Inilarawan ni SMC president at chief operating officer Ramon S. Ang ang Tullahan river bilang agusan ng tubig mula sa mga dam sa Angat at Ipo patungo sa Manila Bay.

Subalit dahil sa polusyon na dulot ng naipong mga basura, burak at mga ilgal na istraktura ay naging barado at bumabaw ang ilog. Kung kaya't tuwing may bagyo o malakas ang pag-ulan ay binabaha ang mga mabababang lugar na malapit sa Tullahan river, partikular ang

Bulacan.

Ayon kay Ang, kanilang lilinisin at palalawakin ang Tullahan river sa pamamagitan ng pagtanggap sa naipong mga basura dito at saka huhukayin para lumalim upang maging maayos ang pag-agos ng tubig sa ilog.

Hinimok din ni Ang ang mga opisyal ng lokal na pamahalaang nakasakop sa Tullahan river na kapag nalinis ang ilog ay siguraduhing mapananatili na ang kalinisan nito.



Sinimulan na ang Tullahan-Tinajeros river system dredging project ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at San Miguel Corporation (SMC) na bahagi ng Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

White sand beach sa Cagayan sasagipin

Magkatuwang na isasalba ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA) ang Nangaramoan Beach na matatagpuan sa Cagayan Valley.

Ito ang napagkasunduan sa Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) na nilagdaan nina DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu at CEZA Administrator at Chief Executive Officer Raul Lambino na ginanap sa DENR Central Office sa Quezon City.

Ang Nangaramoan Beach ay matatagpuan sa bayan ng Santa Ana at sakop ng Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport na pinamamahalaan ng CEZA. Kilala ang Nangaramoan Beach dahil sa pagkakaroon nito ng malinis na tubig at pinong buhangin na maaaring maikumpara sa Boracay Island.

Noong Oktubre 2017 ay ipinasara ng CEZA, sa pakikipagtulungan ng DENR at lokal na pamahalaan ng Santa Ana, ang 500-meter long white sand beach dahil sa hindi pagtupad ng mga resort owner dito sa mga environmental regulation at sanitation standard.

Nakapaloob sa MOA na tutulungan ng DENR ang CEZA sa pagbuo ng Nangaramoan Comprehensive Area Development and Management Plan. (Riz Dominguez)



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Gov't urged: Stop cleared reclamation projects

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

President Duterte's directive to stop reclamation activities in Manila Bay should cover projects that have already received clearances, such as the proposed airports in Cavite and Bulacan, advocates and experts said.

The Save Our Shores Coalition Against Reclamation (SOS Coalition) welcomed the President's recent pronouncement that he will not allow any reclamation activity by the private sector in the Manila Bay during the remainder of his term.

The group, however, said the ban should also cover those that have already secured clearances, either from local government units or national government agencies.

"An explicit and unambiguous policy that stops all proposals and

activities related to land reclamation in Manila Bay must be put in place," the SOS Coalition said in its position paper against reclamation projects in the Manila Bay.

"The government has a clear directive to rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay through the writ of continuing *mandamus* issued by the Supreme Court. Land reclamation directly contradicts that mandate," it added.

Increased risks

Geoscientist Narod Eco, a researcher at the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, warned of the increased disaster risks if reclamation projects will be allowed to push through.

He noted the rising sea level caused by climate change, as well as the vulnerability of Manila Bay and its surrounding areas to flood, storm surges and tsunamis caused by earthquakes.

Eco said reclaimed lands are

prone to liquefaction, which could result in the collapse of structures built on it.

Specific to airports, he noted the experience of the Kansai Airport in Japan, where the government has spend millions to raise runways and erect sea walls to address the problem of sinking.

The scientist said the reclamation will have a significant impact on the marine ecosystem in the Manila Bay, including mangrove and sea grass which scientists believe can significantly contribute to addressing the climate crisis.

Protecting marine creatures

Eco said over 140 species of marine animals were found in the area, including several species of sardines that are vital to the country's food security.

"Sardines are an important food and economic resource, both for our domestic and international

trade. It provides jobs to millions of people, from catching, processing and selling the fish and their products," said the SOS Coalition.

"Needless to say, if the sardine population crashes, all species higher up the food chain - including humans - will be affected. As it is, our seas are already overfished. It is therefore incumbent that we protect this vital source," it added.

The group called on the government to declare Manila Bay as a fisheries management area, with an ecosystem-based framework put in place and strictly enforced.

"Past experience have shown that fish stocks recover and multiply not only within a protected area, but in surrounding waters as well," it said.

"This means that not only communities around Manila Bay will benefit, but also those around the West Philippine Sea," added the coalition.



Law banning single-use plastics pressed

"TIME to pass a law banning single-use plastics."

House Minority Leader and Manila Rep. Bienvenido Abante Jr. made the call as he lauded the national government for leading in banning plastics use.

The National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) issued a resolution banning the use of single-use plastics in all government offices.

Abante said this only means the need to pass a law to permanently prohibit the manufacture, importation, sale, and use of single-use plastic products in the country.

The veteran solon filed House Bill 3773 or the Single-use Plastic Product Ban of 2019.

NSWMC Chair Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu signed NSWMC Resolution No. 1363, Series of 2020 on February 12.

The issuance directs the DENR to prepare and implement the ban on the use of unnecessary single-use plastic products by national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and all other government-controlled offices.

The plastic products covered by the prohibition are cups less than 0.2 millimeter in thickness, drinking straws, coffee stirrers, spoons, forks, knives, "labo" or thin and translucent plastic bags, and thin-filmed sando bags lower than 15 microns.

"This is a step in the right direction and, I believe, a signal to those of us in Congress to pass a law to prohibit the use of single-use plastics in our country," Abante, the author of House Bill No. 3773 or the "Single-use Plastic Product Ban of 2019."

Under the proposal, which is pending in the House, the manufacture, importation, sale, and use of all single-use products is prohibited.

The measure defines single-use plastic as "disposable plastic products which are commonly used for packaging and include items to be used only once that are thrown away or recycled."

Examples of these products are grocery bags, food packaging containers and bags, water bottles, straws, stirrers, styrofoam, cups, sachets, and plastic cutlery.

The Philippines produces 2.7 million metric tons of plastic each year and is estimated to have the 3rd highest rate of mismanaged plastic waste in the world.

"This can be attributed to the fact that ours is what is called a 'sachet economy,' meaning we buy many products in small quantities," the solon said.

Jester Manalastas

DENR, CEZA sign deal to protect beach in Cagayan Valley

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) signed an agreement with the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA) to ensure the protection and sustainability of Nangaramoan Beach in Cagayan Valley province.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu inked the memorandum of agreement with CEZA administrator and Chief Executive Officer Raul Lambino at the DENR Central office in QC.

Under the MOA, the DENR will help CEZA in crafting the Nangaramoan Comprehensive Area Development and Management Plan.

"This will ensure the protection of the environment in the area and the sustainable development of Nangaramoan Beach. This is the biggest substance of this MOA," Cimatu said.

Nangaramoan Beach, located in the town of Santa Ana, is famous for its pristine waters and white powdery sand comparable to the world-renowned Boracay Island.

Joel dela Torre



Single-use plastic bags banned in NY

By Peter Hutchison

NEW YORK — Consumerist mecca New York targets its throwaway culture this weekend with a ban on single-use plastic bags that has been years in the making and is still rare in America.

New Yorkers like to see themselves at the forefront of efforts to save the environment but are used to receiving groceries in free plastic bags, often doubled up to ensure sturdiness.

On Sunday, that will change when New York becomes only the third US state to outlaw the non-biodegradable sacks blamed for choking rivers, littering neighborhoods and suffocating wildlife.

Environmental activists welcome the new law but caution that exemptions will weaken its effect, while some small businesses worry the ban might negatively impact their profits.

At the Westside Market in Manhattan, 66-year-old Janice Vrana, who says she has been shopping with a reusable cloth bag for a decade, is delighted "pervasive" plastic sacks are being banished.

"You could drive over them 500 times with a Mack Truck and they probably wouldn't break down. Whatever little I can do, I do," she told AFP.

Janine Franciosa, a 38-year-old who works in advertising, said it is great people are becoming more aware of how their "everyday purchases are affecting the environment."

But not everyone is happy.

Westside Market manager Ian Joskowitz, 52, told AFP some customers were

"upset" because they use free plastic bags as garbage bags.

FINES

New York uses some 23 billion plastic bags every year, according to the state government.

About 85 percent are thrown away, ending up in landfills, and on streets and beaches, it says.

After several failed attempts, lawmakers finally approved the ban in April 2019.

It bars all retailers who pay state taxes — such as department stores, supermarkets, neighborhood corner stores and gas stations — from providing plastic bags to customers.

Violators can expect fines of up to \$500, although officials have said they will give stores time to adapt to the new rules.

The ban will "protect our natural resources for future generations," said Governor Andrew Cuomo when he announced the legislation last year.

The law allows New York city and counties to levy a five-cent tax on paper bags, with part of the resulting revenue going to an environmental protection fund.

Kate Kurera, deputy director of Environmental Advocates of New York, says the ban will cause "a tremendous reduction" in plastic waste pollution.

She laments, however, that food takeouts, beloved by the city's 8.6 million inhabitants, are exempt.

Other exemptions include bags for prescription drugs, plastic wrapping for newspapers delivered to subscribers, and bags used solely for non-prepackaged food such as meat and fish.

Kurera wishes the government would make the

paper bag fee mandatory to force customers to bring their own carriers, noting that producing paper bags is intensive in terms of oil, fossil fuels and trees used.

'LIVE WITH IT!'

"Ideally neither bag is preferable," she told AFP. "Behavior is slower to change when people know they can get a free paper bag."

Greg Biryła, New York state director at the National Federation of Independent Business, says alternatives can cost up to seven times more than plastic bags.

"They are proportionally more burdensome on small businesses who aren't ordering in as big a quantity as their big business counterparts," he told AFP.

California and Oregon have statewide bans of plastic bags while Hawaii has a de facto ban.

Four other states have bans starting soon while Texas has prevented its cities from outlawing plastic bags.

New York is viewed as one of the most innovative cities in the world, but on the issue of plastic it has some catching up to do internationally.

Ubiquitous across the Big Apple are single-use plastic utensils such as cutlery, straws and stirrers, which European Union countries have voted to outlaw by next year.

New York's older residents note that plastic bags only became available in US grocery stores in 1979, signaling how quickly habits can change.

"When I was growing up we brought our own bags," shopper Denise Shaleon told AFP, adding of the ban: "The New Yorker will have to live with it!"



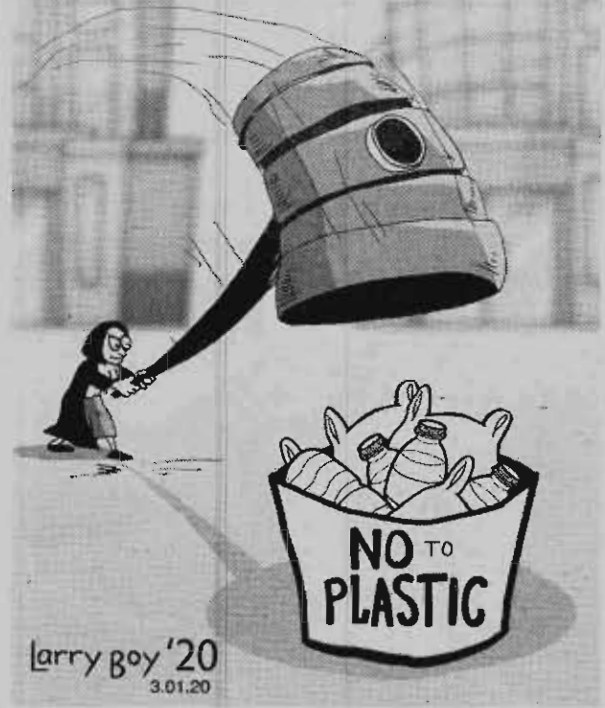
Editorial

Bawal na ang plastic sa mga tanggapan ng gobyerno

INATASAN ng National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) sa bisa ng isang resolusyon ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na i-implement ang pagbabawal sa paggamit ng plastics sa mga tanggapan ng pamahalaan. Kabilang sa mga ibabawal ay ang plastic cups, drinking straws, coffee stirrers at mga disposable na kutsara, tinidor at kutsilyo. Pinaplantsa na ng DENR kung kailan ipatutupad ang kautusan.

Magandang hakbang ito para mabawasan at mawala nang tuluyan ang plastic sa buhay ng mga Pilipino.

Marami na ang nakaaalam sa masamang dulot ng single-use plastics o disposable plastics. Problema ang plastic pollution kaya nararapat na itong ipagbawal. Kung hindi ito sosolusyunan, malubhang problema ang



kahaharapin ng mamamayan.

Ayon sa survey ng Social Weather Stations (SWS) 7 sa bawat 10 Pilipino ang gustong ipagbawal na ang paggamit ng plastics. Kabilang sa mga plastic na gustong ipagbawal ay ang tinatawag na sando bags, plastic straws at stirrers, plastic labo bags, styrofoam containers, sachets, tetra pack ng juices, plastic na baso, kutsara, tinidor, botelya ng juice at tubig. Ayon pa sa survey, 59.8 bilyong piraso ng plastic sachets at 17 bilyon na shopping bags ang ginagamit sa bansa taun-taon at ang mga ito ay humahantong sa mga estero, ilog at dagat. Ang Pilipinas ay pang-apat sa mga bansa sa Asia na malakas magtapon ng mga basurang plastic sa karagatan.

Noong nakaraang taon, nagpahiwatig si President Duterte na balak niyang ipagbawal ang paggamit ng plastic sa buong bansa. Nabanggit niya ito sa Cabinet meeting at maaaring lagdaan niya ang isang kautusan ukol dito. Maganda ang naisip na ito ng Presidente at nararapat niyang ituloy para makalaya sa plastic ang mga Piney.

Hindi lamang ang kapaligiran ang nasisira dahil sa paggamit ng plastic. Maski ang mga lamandagat o mga isda ay napipinsala at namamatay. Ilang whale shark na ang sumadsad sa dalampasigan at patay na. Nang buksan ang tiyan, nadiskubre ang maraming plastic na kinain nito na naging dahilan ng pagkamatay.

Ipagpatuloy ang paglaban sa plastic. Iigtas ang bansa sa lalo pang pagkasira.



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POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

When death comes in plastic packaging

SEEING the filth poisoning our rivers and the trash being heaved back to us by the grumbling sea, one wonders if we could still learn to respect nature and coexist in a balanced ecosystem.

The Philippines has been mentioned as one of the big contributors to the garbage clogging streams and polluting the oceans, most of it traceable to ill-managed dump sites and to the non-biodegradable packaging thrown by consumers.

Much of the trash collected here and there is plastic waste, including sachets, candy wrappers, plastic bottles and bags. Mostly discarded without systematic sorting, both recyclable and non-recyclable plastic end up as major pollutants of the environment.

The Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003) has been with us for nearly two decades, but the public and private sectors have failed to use this law to clean up and reinvigorate the environment.

Plastic is the most commonly used material for packaging, especially by the food and pharmaceutical industries, because it is cheap, durable and lightweight. It maintains the integrity of the contents and makes the products affordable to mass consumers.

The demand for cheaper products has led to the use of single-serve packets and the rise of a sachet retail market. Witness vendors peddling cigarettes by the stick, drinking water in small bottles, candies by the piece, and corner stores selling myriad items in sachets.

The law has not singled out plastic as being "non-environmentally acceptable," but in all its forms (sachets, bottles, straws, etc.), whether recyclable or not, plastic ends up as a key culprit in littering and polluting the environment.

There are over 30 bills in the Congress, most of them seeking to solve or minimize plastic pollution by banning or phasing out "single use plastic," or SUP. The term "SUP" could be misleading as it seems to assume that plastic used multiple times, such as thick plastic bags, will not pollute (they do!) the environment when thrown away.

While a ban or phase-out scheme addresses plastic pollution, it may not solve the practical problems that minimal use of plastic containers inflict on consumers in the lowest income brackets.

Why not use other kinds of packaging or containers? Alternatives to plastic, such as glass and metal are more expensive, sometimes unwieldy. But the use of glass or metal containers pushes prices beyond the reach of the poor.

Using paper for sachets gives rise to other problems. The very quality that makes paper biodegradable also makes products in paper packaging susceptible to contamination and shortens their shelf life while exposing consumers to health risks.

Supposedly biodegradable plastics do not readily decay, but often require industrial intervention to truly degrade. In the meantime, they pollute the environment even in their deceptively smaller physical forms.



Some environmentalist groups have suggested refilling stations, or a revival of those times when one bought soft drinks from the corner store while paying a "deposito" for the bottle refundable upon its return to the store.

We have seen variations of having consumers bring containers or receptacles to stores where they are refilled. It is difficult to justify this messy handling of food products since the level of hygiene will be as hard to control as in buying food in open containers.

• Legislation sought to reduce use of plastic

PLASTIC has proven its usefulness and versatility, but it poses a threat to the environment after its use. Is there a way to exploit the benefits of plastic, and yet prevent its harming the environment after use?

A number of countries have tried implementing a solution called "Extended Producer Responsibility." The principle of EPR is simple:

The producers and importers of plastic products, mainly plastic packaging, will collect the plastic waste after the products are used. The volume each manufacturer will collect will be proportionate to the amount of plastic it has sold to the public. The collection target will progressively increase until the amount of plastic collected will be at least equal to the amount sold.

The cost of collection will be borne by the producers of plastic, under the "producer pays" principle. Producers that are too small to set up a collection system can engage another operation called a "Producer Responsibility Organization" to collect their plastic waste.

Under the PRO scheme, no plastic packaging material will be exempt. With all producers of plastic covered by the law, theoretically, all the plastic produced will be taken out of the environment.

Moreover, producers seeking to avoid the cost of collection will have a reason to seek cheap alternatives to plastic. The producer that resorts to an alternative material would thus gain a competitive advantage.

The plastic collected can now be put to use again. The abundance of raw material will encourage recyclers to use the plastic to make new packaging materials or to use the plastic to manufacture other products.

For example, we have seen waste plastic used to make school chairs, eco-bricks, and even to lay out roads and pavements. Waste plastic is now also used by the cement industry as an alternative fuel to coal. There is also a potential to use waste plastic for waste-to-energy purposes. Japan, for example, generates a significant amount of electricity from plastic waste.

A bill mandating the adoption of EPR (House Bill No. 6279) has been filed by Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez. Authors of bills banning or phasing out plastic and producers of plastic may want to study his bill and see a possible consolidation of approaches to the common problem.

Our initial reading of the bill shows that it could be a win for nature, as plastic will be taken out of the environment – as it is also a win for producers, who will still be allowed to use plastic but with incentives to use less, or none at all.

* * *

Nota Bene: All Postscripts can be accessed at manilamail.com. Follow author on Twitter as @FDPascual. Email feedback to dikpascual@gmail.com



World-class facility

Metro Manila and other areas in the country, which have yet to find a sustainable solution to the problem of solid waste disposal, can learn a thing or two from Clark and Subic as well as other areas in Luzon.

Both Clark and Subic freeports and over 100 cities and municipalities in Central and Northern Luzon are being now served by a world-class sanitary landfill facility which is both environment and eco-friendly.

This ISO-certified waste disposal site is of course the complete opposite of many un-sanitary and illegal dumpsites as well as open dumpsites which are now the subject of an intensified hunt by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

HIDDEN AGENDA



**MARY ANN
LL. REYES**

Over the past decade and since it started actual operations, Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. has put a premium on environmentally safe and efficient waste disposal, which is one of the reasons why it was able to secure triple-ISO certificates, making it one of the very few if not the only sanitary landfill to have such distinction.

And soon, other areas will benefit from its operation as the country's first high technology sanitary landfill goes full steam and as it sets its sights to cater to a larger market starting early this year, according to Holger Holst and Rufo Colayco, founder and president respectively of MCWMC, during a press briefing at its main landfill facilities in Sitio Kalangitan, Capas, Tarlac.

Armed with world-class German technology, the Tarlac-based lone ISO-certified engineered sanitary landfill currently caters to more than 100 local government units in Central Luzon including two of the country's major economic zones including its respective locators and residents – the Clark and Subic Freeports based in Pampanga and Zambales respectively.

According to company officials, the volume of garbage and wastes currently being handled by Metro Clark's 100-hectare facility in Tarlac has substantially increased from 1,600 tons in 2018 to 3,000 tons.

Among its biggest customers are the cities of Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija, Angeles in Pampanga and Tarlac City in Tarlac province.

Company officials said that while they are currently catering to a few LGUs in Northern Luzon that includes Pangasinan, La Union, and Baguio City, they see positive developments and opportunities to cater to the landfill requirements and to provide disposal services to Bulacan and Metro Manila.

Of the 100 hectare Kalangitan Sanitary landfill, 70 hectares are dedicated for the landfill and 10 hectares for recycling facilities while 15 hectares are set aside as environmental buffer and five hectares for offices and other uses.

The landfill integrates cutting-edge technology and highly advanced engineering to control and totally mitigate any possible pollutants such as poisonous gas and foul-smelling liquids produced by decaying wastes.

Officials pointed out that unlike other landfill sites, the wastes being delivered to Metro Clark's main disposal facility guarantees safety and protection of the environment."

But from mere landfill, the Clark Integrated Facility operated by MCWMC is also moving to high-technology recycling and renewable energy generation. Colayco said that the company is set to build facilities for renewable energy generation out of collected garbage and waste within next year, saying that their waste-to-energy facilities will bring waste to the next level and help ensure that the company will be ready to accommodate the projected volume of waste to be generated by cities and municipalities in the Central and Northern Luzon region.

As planned, the company will develop an advance centralized recycling facility at the waste management center where materials will be segregated for recycling and processing into secondary fuel. The secondary fuel will then be used as the primary feed stock for a secondary fuel CHP which will generate up to 35 megawatts of electrical renewable energy for the New Clark City.

The move will reduce the amount of residual waste at the landfill by 70 percent, extending the lifespan of system for at least 50 years and reducing the emission of landfill leachate and landfill gas by virtually eliminating the disposal of organic waste in the landfill.

Colayco said that MCWMC is transforming waste to usable energy and generating auspicious possibilities for the generations to come as it could guarantee secured and sustainable waste management solution for Central Luzon for more decades to come.

MCWMC is a joint venture of Filipino and German investors (BN Ingenuire GmbH and Heers & Brockstedth Umwelttechnik GmbH. Its main facility is built based on internationally accepted standards which substantially exceed the Philippines' sanitary landfill standards as stipulated under Republic 9003 or the Ecological Waste Management Act of 2000.

According to officials, the company has already invested hundreds of millions of pesos to put up the facility including critical infrastructure projects such as roads leading to and from the main facilities, among others.

The landfill integrates cutting edge technology and highly-advanced engineering to control the poisonous gas and foul smelling liquid produced by decaying wastes. The wastes delivered and disposed to the site undergo a meticulous process to guarantee safety and protection to the environment.

MCWMC's German partners have over 30 years experience in local solid waste management business and have installed worldwide more than 2,500 MW in renewable energies (wind, waste, solar). It has gained 60 years international experience in waste management and environmental engineering.

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



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DENR, CEZA TEAM UP TO PROTECT CAGAYAN'S TOURIST SPOT

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority have pledged to protect Nangaramoan Beach which is famous for its white sand.

The two agencies signed a memorandum of agreement as a first step to the crafting of a protection plan for beach.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and CEZA Administrator and Chief Executive Officer Raul Lambino signed the MOA last Feb. 18 at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City.

Nangaramoan Beach is famous for its pristine waters and white powdery sand comparable to the world-renowned Boracay Island. It is located in the town of Santa Ana, which is within the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport that is managed and supervised by CEZA.

In October 2017, CEZA—in coordination with the DENR and the local government of Santa Ana—shut down

the 500-meter-long white sand beach for failure of operators to comply with environmental regulations and sanitation standards.

Under the MOA, the DENR will help CEZA in crafting the Nangaramoan Comprehensive Area Development and Management Plan.

"This will ensure the protection of the environment in the area and the sustainable development of Nangaramoan Beach. This is the biggest substance of this MOA," Cimatu said.

Lambino, for his part, said that CEZA will rely on the technical inputs of the DENR in the development of the plan which, according to him, would serve as "the blueprint to ensure the preservation of the natural resources, biodiversity and cultural heritage of Nangaramoan Beach."

He also said that the DENR-CEZA partnership would benefit "not just the tourists, but more importantly the stakeholders."

"CEZA recognizes that this MOA will

be the instrument to develop the area with the permission of the DENR, and we are thankful for their support," Lambino added.

Meanwhile, Cimatu advised the CEZA to require resort operators to build their own sewage treatment plants and to strictly implement the 20-meter shoreline easement rule.

Cimatu said that it must be clear to the operators that structures encroaching into the easement are considered illegal and must be demolished.

The DENR chief also warned against cutting down trees found within forestlands as these are protected by the country's forestry law.

In 2013, CNN Travel named the beaches of Santa Ana and in nearby Palau Island as among the best in the world. These beaches became the shooting locations of two seasons of the US reality TV series "Survivor" in 2014. **Maricel V. Cruz**



DENR seeks to protect Cagayan's white beach

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA) will be crafting a comprehensive management plan to ensure the protection and sustainability of Nangaramoan Beach in Cagayan.

A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed last Feb. 18 by DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and CEZA Administrator and chief ex-

ecutive officer Raul Lambino for the crafting of the Nangaramoan Comprehensive Area Development and Management Plan.

"This will ensure the protection of the environment in the area and the sustainable development of Nangaramoan Beach. This is the biggest substance of this MOA," Cimatu said.

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Special Economic Zone and Freeport that is managed and supervised by CEZA.

Lambino said CEZA will rely on the technical inputs of the DENR in the development of the management plan that will benefit not just tourists, but also stakeholders.

Cimatu advised CEZA to require resort operators to build their own sewage treatment plants and strictly implement the 20-meter shoreline easement rule.

It must be clear to the operators that structures encroaching into the easement are considered illegal and must be demolished, the DENR chief said. He also warned against cutting down trees within the forestlands.



STRATEGIC
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MAR 01 2020

Tourism Is Up

The best industry players in the Philippines named at the 16th Rotary Club of Manila Tourism Awards

Tourism plays a major role in accelerating a country's economic development, brand value, and image, but a landscape is just a picture without its preservers—proactive individuals who bridge the gap between the Philippines and our strong relations with foreign countries, even small-scale job-generating hoteliers, and media men who act as vanguards in making sure that our country's destinations, plans, developments, and even alarming news at a time of a global outbreak never go unnoticed.



VIANCA GAMBOA

At its 16th Tourism Awards, the Rotary Club of Manila recently hailed 16 outstanding individuals "...who gave their utmost services to promote and develop tourism industry here and abroad," said RCM president-elect and concurrent chair of Tourism Awards committee **Bobby Joseph**, over a luncheon ceremony at the New World Hotel Makati.

Aside from promoting goodwill and humanitarian efforts among professional leaders in the country, the Rotary Club of Manila has made its mark as a prestigious award-giving body that honors outstanding individuals in a soaring field, like tourism. "It is one sector of our economy that deserves the plaudits of the country, where revenue stream has risen every year since 1987," said RCM president **Jackie Rodriguez**. Members of the award committee who organized the event included co-chair and past president **Francis Juico**; past district governor **Vince Carlos**; past vice president **Chito Zaldarriaga**; past president **Frank Evaristo**; and director **Amading Valdez**.

The list of awardees included: our very own **Krizette Chu**, associate editor and travel editor of *Manila Bulletin*

'It is one sector of our economy that deserves the plaudits of the country, where revenue stream has risen every year since 1987.'

Lifestyle for Print Media Category; **Ariel Abriam**, owner and managing director of Ariel's Point for Resort Category; **Bernd Schneider**, cluster representative of Raffles Hotels and Resorts and Fairmont Makati for Hotel Category; **Hanky Lee III** of Henry Hotel for Heritage Home Category; **Salah Al Balushi**, EVP of supply chain management at Oman Aviation Group for Air Transport Category; **Radjie Caram Jr.**, founding chairman and CEO of Island Living Channel for Philippines' Largest Lifestyle and Travel Channel Category; **Felipe Gozon**, chairman and CEO of GMA Network, Inc. for TV Media Category; **Lala Ventura-Lazaro**, head of Metro Channel for Blogger Media Category; **Hon. Sol Aragon**, representative of Third District of Laguna for Legislative Media Category; **Edgar Saavedra**, chairman of Megawide Construction for Hotel, Airport, and Resort Construction Category; **Francisco Mauricio**, president and COO of Avis Rent-A-Car International-Guevent Transport Holdings for Land Transportation Category; **Justice Lazaro**, chairman of Tiger Resort Leisure Entertainment, Inc. for MICE Category; **Sec. Eduardo Año** of Department of Interior and Local Government for Environment Category; **Leo Rey Yanson**, president of Ceres Liner for Land Transportation Category; **Ramon Ang**, vice chairman, president, and COO of San Miguel Corporation for National Infrastructure Category; and **Sec. Roy Cimatu** of Department of Environment and Natural Resources for Environment Category.

It was also the perfect time for Sec. Cimatu to convene these tourism players and discuss about the status and upcoming development plans of DENR in partnership with RCM, including the cleanup of Manila Bay and Quezon City waterways, and other marine and coastal ecosystems management programs.



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AWAY FROM THROWAWAY CULTURE

NY BANS SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

NEW YORK—Consumerist mecca New York targets its throwaway culture this weekend with a ban on single-use plastic bags that has been years in the making and is still rare in America.

New Yorkers like to see themselves at the forefront of efforts to save the environment but are used to receiving groceries in free plastic bags, often doubled up to ensure sturdiness.

On Sunday, that will change when New York becomes only the third US state to outlaw the non-biodegradable sacks blamed for choking rivers, littering neighborhoods and suffocating wildlife.

Environmental activists welcome the new law but caution that exemptions will weaken its effect, while some small businesses worry the ban might neg-

atively impact their profits.

New York uses some 23 billion plastic bags every year, according to the state government. About 85 percent are thrown away, ending up in landfills, and on streets and beaches, it says.

After several failed attempts, lawmakers finally approved the ban in April 2019.

Violators can expect fines of up to \$500. The law allows New York City and counties to levy a 5-cent tax on paper bags, with part of the resulting revenue going to an environmental protection fund.

California and Oregon have statewide bans of plastic bags while Hawaii has a de facto ban.

Four other states have bans starting soon while Texas has prevented its cities from outlawing plastic bags. —AFP



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Not a decade to spare for climate action

Potsdam—The last decade was the hottest on record, according to independent data analyses from Nasa and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The reality of climate change is sinking in, with millions now feeling its effects—from rising sea levels and disappearing coastlines to more frequent extreme weather such as droughts, floods, and wildfires. Indeed, given current atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and the projected trajectory of future emissions, more record temperatures are inevitable.

Scientists have been sounding the alarm for decades that climate change is real and getting worse. As the adverse effects of unabated emissions keep mounting, the alarm is becoming deafening. But at the same time, other current realities cannot be ignored. The imminent threat posed by climate change is coinciding with shifts in longstanding geopolitical alliances; continuing economic inequality, which is fueling social unrest in many countries; and the advent of artificial intelligence, big data, and a constant stream of new technologies, which are transforming the way we live and work—with both positive and negative consequences.

The challenges are daunting. But it is not too late to chart a different course for our planet and its inhabitants. We need to put the world's best minds to work now on finding solutions that will not only help us mitigate and adapt to

WORLD VIEW

JOHAN ROCKSTRÖM, LARS HEIKENSTEN,
AND MARCIA MCNUTT

climate change, but will also reduce inequality, lift people out of poverty, and build trust in international cooperation. We must find ways to harness the best that technology has to offer while anticipating and mitigating potential harms. And we can ill afford another decade of inaction—the consequences are far too high.

This is why the Nobel Foundation is hosting its first-ever Nobel Prize Summit, with the theme "Our Planet, Our Future," in Washington, from April 29 to May 1. The summit—supported by the US National Academy of Sciences, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, and the Stockholm Resilience Centre/Beijer Institute—will bring together more than 20 Nobel laureates and other experts from around the world to explore the question: What can be achieved in this decade to put the world on a path to a more sustainable, more prosperous future for all of humanity?

The summit takes place at a pivotal moment. This year, the United Nations launches the Decade of Action toward achieving its Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Countries around the world will be making

transformational decisions regarding biodiversity loss, climate change, and the state of our oceans. Demand for action is also growing. In the past few weeks, prominent global business leaders have pledged to make sustainability a top priority in their investment decisions. And in many parts of the world, young climate activists are drawing the world's attention through rolling school strikes.

Amid this flurry of activity, the Nobel Prize Summit will provide the space to propose real-world solutions grounded in science and evidence. The summit will create a new platform for scientists, policymakers, business leaders, and civil-society groups to meet and share ideas.

Today's leaders must not bequeath a dangerously destabilized planet to future generations, and we will be placing special emphasis on engagement with today's young people. But we all have a shared responsibility to make this a better world. If we start now, this decade can become the turning point that puts us on course toward a more vibrant, viable, and equitable future for humanity. *Project Syndicate*

Johan Rockström is director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. Lars Heikensten is executive director of the Nobel Foundation. Marcia McNutt is president of the US National Academy of Sciences.



EDITORIAL

Silent killer

Fears of COVID-19 may have compelled most of us to wear face masks, but there's another crucial reason why we should keep them on: A recent report has indicated that Filipinos are breathing dirty, unsafe air. According to the 2019 World Air Quality Report compiled by Swiss-based company IQAir from ground-based monitoring stations around the globe, the Philippines' annual mean for PM_{2.5}—a pollutant widely regarded as most harmful to human health—was pegged at 17 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m³) last year. This is almost double the safe level set by the World Health Organization (WHO), which placed the exposure threshold at 10 ug/m³.

While IQAir considers the country's air pollution level as "moderate" based on the United States Air Quality Index (US AQI), the health recommendation for such level is for sensitive individuals to avoid outdoor activity as "they may experience respiratory symptoms."

Globally, the Philippines ranked 57th out of 98 countries in terms of average PM_{2.5} concentration last year. Indonesia topped the list in Southeast Asia, with an annual mean of 51.7 ug/m³, followed by Vietnam (34.1 ug/m³), and Myanmar (31 ug/m³).

Among the factors cited behind the unsafe air levels are the burning of toxic waste, pollution and heat-trapping carbon emissions from the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, as well as rapid urbanization, which has resulted in the inordinate number of motor vehicles running on fossil fuels.

According to the Land Transportation Office, as of August 2019, the National Capital Region, which includes Metro Manila, accounted for the largest number of registered motor vehicles at 1,644,932. Coming second is its neighboring Region IV-A, with 880,168. These two areas alone account for almost 40 percent of the total 6,783,696 registered vehicles nationwide.

Four major pollutants come from these vehicles: carbon monoxide when the carbon in fuel doesn't burn completely, as well as hydrocarbons—a toxic compound of hydrogen and carbon emitted from a car's exhaust.

Indoor air pollution is also a risk in the Philippines, with most cooking in urban poor and rural areas done using kerosene or solid fuels such as wood or coal. Deaths among women and kids have been linked to indoor air pollution.

The air pollutants we inhale are composed of particulate matter (PM), a mixture of solid particles or liquid droplets in the atmosphere that includes water, dust and salt particles. PM_{2.5}, which the IQAir measures, is a particulate matter that has a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers, or just 3 percent of the diameter of a human hair. In high levels, fine particulate matter can reduce visibility. Worse, it is so tiny it can easily travel deep into one's bloodstream through the respiratory tract, leading to such ailments as asthma, heart disease, and lung cancer.

The Philippines ranked third in terms of the highest cases of death due to air pollution, according to a May 2018 report by the WHO; that translates to around 45.3 deaths per 100,000 Filipinos due to air pollution. China ranked first, with 81.5 deaths, followed by Mongolia, with 48.8.

The IQAir report meanwhile indicated that, globally, PM_{2.5} pollution accounts for 29 percent of all deaths and disease from lung cancer, 24 percent of all deaths from stroke, and 43 percent of all deaths and disease from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

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

Local environmental groups are calling on the government to take immediate steps to improve the country's air quality, noting that the report looked only at PM_{2.5} pollution, and "does not include other pollutants such as sulfur oxide, nitrous oxide, ozone and other contaminants that carry deleterious health risks." A recent report by Greenpeace Southeast Asia estimates that "toxic emissions can cost Filipinos as much as a 1.9 percent loss of gross domestic product and 27,000 premature deaths."

It is yet another health crisis the country can ill afford. As suggested by local green groups, it's time for the government to review and update the Clean Air Act of 1999, and implement long-term programs that would redirect the country away from wasteful and air-polluting practices. This isn't just a question of convenience; the state of our air has become a matter of survival.