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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



ORDER HAILED AS WIN FOR ENVIRONMENT

DENR STOPS QUARRY FIRM'S MASUNGI PROJECT

By **Jhesset O. Enano**
@JhessetEnanoINQ

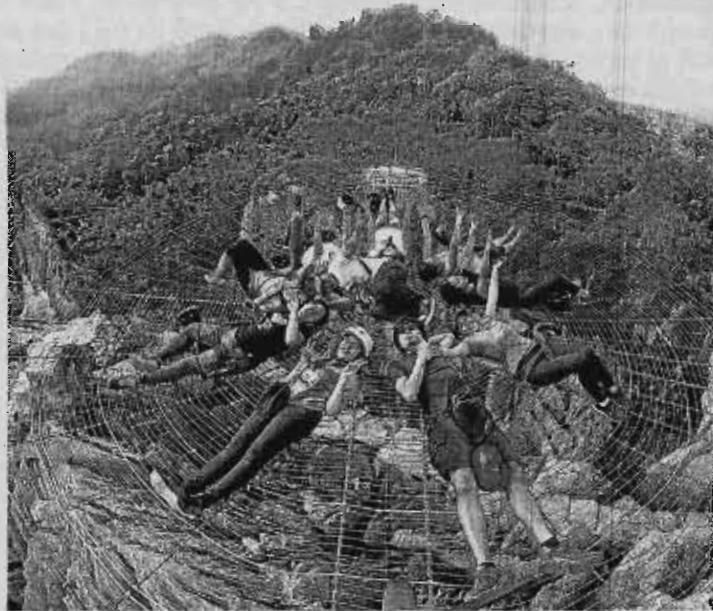
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the closure and cancellation of permit of the quarry operator that encroached into the Masungi Geopark project in Baras town, Rizal province.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said that aside from the closure, representatives of Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., a quarry firm based in Antipolo City, would be summoned and given a notice of violation.

Probe

Cimatu inspected the geopark project on Tuesday, following reports that at least 500 hectares of degraded forestland was fenced off by the quarry company. The illegal fencing cut off the Masungi Georeserve Foundation and its team from accessing the area, which represents a quarter of the 2,000-ha land reserved for their conservation work done in partnership with the government.

Local environment personnel, along with policemen and soldiers, took down the barbed wires and nails that were hammered last week into "tibig," or



TOP SPOT "Sapot," a platform that looks like a spiderweb, is the most popular spot at Masungi Georeserve in Rizal province. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

sacking trees, which were native to the Philippines.

Cimatu said the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau would look into the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) granted by the environment agency to Rapid City in 1998.

He also ordered a probe into similar agreements with two other quarrying firms—Quarry Rock Group Inc. and

Quimson Limestone Inc. The three companies were allegedly operating within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape using MPSAs granted to them in the late 1990s.

"This is a watershed and also a protected area," Cimatu said, noting that under the law, mining activities should be prohibited in these sites.

He said the DENR would not anymore allow the renewal

or extension of Rapid City's MPSA, which would expire soon after 25 years of validity.

The Inquirer tried but failed to reach any of Rapid City's officials on Wednesday.

'Good signal'

The Masungi Georeserve Foundation, which manages the georeserve that features ecotourism activities, hailed the DENR's action as a big step for the environment.

"It's definitely a signal that they prioritize Masungi and that the environment is part of the government's agenda," Billie Dumaliang, the foundation's managing trustee and advocacy specialist, told the Inquirer on Wednesday.

"It is also a very good signal to all other environment offenders that the government will not tolerate any violations of the law," she added.

However, the recent incident in the geopark, along with harassment that Masungi's team members had received from quarry firms, provides a very clear picture of the destruction of forests that have been happening for so many years, Dumaliang said.

"We will hold the secretary to his word until all of [his orders] are implemented," she said. INQ



DENR's Cimatu warns quarry firms encroaching on Masungi Georeserve

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

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has issued a stern warning against quarry operators reportedly encroaching on conservation areas in the province of Rizal.

He said erring quarry companies may face closure and their permits revoked should they continue to threaten protected areas covered by environmental laws.

On Tuesday, Cimatu had to skip the World Wildlife Day celebration at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center to conduct a site inspection in the Masungi Georeserve in the town of Baras, which is being threatened by a quarry firm.

Verifying reports that a quarry company had started to put up barb wires to fence off a 500,000-hectare portion of the ecotourism and conservation site, Cimatu vowed to conduct a thorough investigation.

"Aside from closure, we will summon and give them notice of violation with what they did here," Cimatu said in a statement.

The DENR chief was responding to an appeal made by the management of Masungi Georeserve against Rapid City Realty and Development Corp. who had allegedly employed heavily armed members of the Special Action Force (SAF) to harass their volunteers.

Rapid City Realty and Development Corp has an existing Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) granted by the DENR in 1998. It is now being looked into by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) on Cimatu's instructions.

Learning of the abuses committed by quarry companies in Rizal, Cimatu had instructed the MGB to scrutinize the MPSAs of two other quarrying firms—Quarry Rock Group Inc., and Quimson Limestone Inc.—which along with Rapid City are operating within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape using the MPSAs they secured in the late 1990s.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, who accompanied Cimatu during the inspection, said the DENR chief led the dismantling and seizure of the barbed wires that were hammered into several Tibig trees in the area.

"Secretary Cimatu has already ordered [issuance of a] notice of violation to Rapid City and wants all quarry companies there to undergo investigation. If there's a violation, he is really going to cancel their MPSAs. He got mad upon seeing the barb wires nailed to those trees when we went there to

investigate, especially because the area is a Protected Area," Antiporda told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

The notice of violation, he said, signals the start of "due process," adding that "as much as possible, he wants the MPSA canceled," he said.

In a statement, Cimatu expressed exasperation that quarry companies continue to threaten important watersheds.

"This is a watershed, and also a protected area," Cimatu pointed out. "We have already identified this as a protected area and these mining companies are within the protected area."

Some mining companies, including quarry companies, however, have prior mining rights over vast tracts of land prior to the enactment of the Republic Act 7586 of 1992 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act or even prior to the declaration of some areas that are rich in biodiversity as a national park or critical habitat which makes them off-limits to destructive development activities.

Mining companies and conservation advocates have been clashing over legal issues hounding the Nipas Act and Republic Act 7942 or the Philippine

Mining Act of 1995, as some MPSAs overlap or are even wholly within a declared Protected Area.

An MPSA usually granted to a mining or a quarry company has a validity of 25 years from the year it was granted.

Since Rapid City's MPSA will soon expire and is subject for renewal, Cimatu assumed that the fencing off was intended for the expansion of its property.

"The company's MPSA is due for renewal, that's why it is expanding. I'm sure it would seek [an] extension of the MPSA, but I will not allow any more extensions here," Cimatu pointed out.

He added: "In fact, I'm even considering a closure of this MPSA. There is no such thing [as allowing] a mining company—either metallic or non-metallic—to have mining operations in this area."

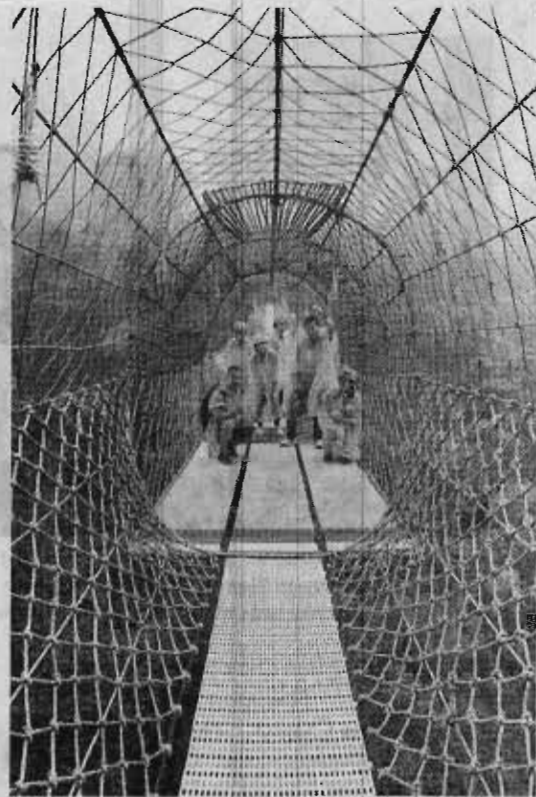
Meanwhile, Cimatu directed Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (Penro) Isidro Mercado to expedite the establishment of a satellite office in Masungi Geopark to strengthen the protection of the nature park and surrounding protected areas.



TITLE: DENR's Cimatu warns quarry firms

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enriching on Masungi Georeserve



FRAMED by the iconic spider web-like cocoon, a group of local tourists takes a break at a suspended walkway at Masungi Georeserve (right). At left, Secretary Cimatu leads removal of barbed wire. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



DENR to shut down quarrying activity in Masungi

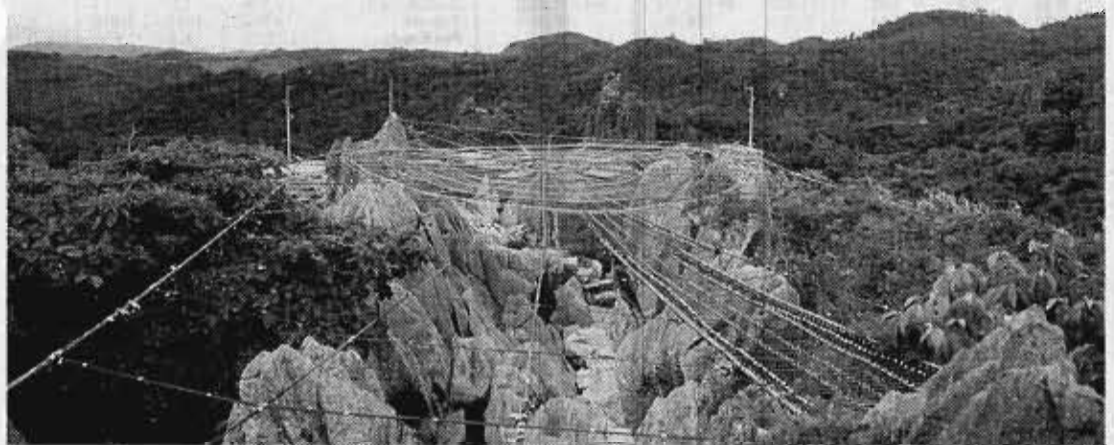
BY JED ALDOUS MACAPAGAL

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it will close down and cancel the permit of the quarry operator that was reportedly encroaching into the Masungi Geopark in Baras, Rizal.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said apart from closure, the agency will issue a notice of violation to Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., operator of the quarry, after he verified reports that a quarter of the 2,000-hectare ecotourism and conservation site was fenced off.

Notably, the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) of the company was granted by the DENR in 1998 and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) is now looking into it.

The contract has a validity of 25 years from the year it was granted. It is nearing its expiration but is still subject for renewal.



The Masungi Geopark in Baras, Rizal is a watershed and a protected area.

“This is a watershed and also a protected area. We have already identified this as a protected area and these mining companies are within the protected area... The company’s MPSA is due for renewal that’s why it is expanding. I’m sure it would seek for extension of the MPSA but I will not allow anymore extension here,”

the DENR chief said.

“In fact, I’m even considering a closure of this MPSA. There is no such thing that we will allow a mining company either metallic or non-metallic to have mining operations in this area,” Cimatu added.

He also ordered to fast track the establishment of a satellite office in Masungi Geopark to protect

the nature park and its surrounding area.

The MGB is set to scrutinize the MPSAs of two other quarrying firms, Quarry Rock Group Inc. and Quimson Limestone Inc., which are operating within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape using the MPSAs they secured in the late 1990s.



DENR to close quarry firm in Rizal ecopark

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

A quarry firm reportedly encroaching into the Masungi Geopark in Baras, Rizal will be closed and its permit will be cancelled, according to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

"We will summon and give them a notice of violation for what they did here," Cimatu said after visiting the area on Tuesday to verify reports that Rapid City Realty and Development Corp. fenced off a quarter of the 2,000-hectare ecotourism and conservation site.

Cimatu and other officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) removed the barbed wire in the area.

He said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB)

is looking into the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) granted by the DENR to the quarry company in 1998.

Cimatu said he also ordered the MGB to scrutinize the MPSAs of two other quarry firms—Quarry Rock Group Inc. and Quimson Limestone Inc.—which along with Rapid City are operating within the Upper Marikina River Basin protected landscape using the MPSAs they secured in the late 1990s.

"This is a watershed. We have identified this as a protected area and the mining companies are within the protected area," Cimatu said.

He said Rapid City could be expanding its property in preparation for the renewal of its MPSA.



DENR's Cimatu threatens to shut down quarry firm

By Rio N. Araja

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu on Wednesday threatened to shut down a quarrying firm and cancel its permit for encroachment into the Masungi Geopark in Baras, Rizal.

"Aside from closure, we will summon and give them notice of violation with what they did here," he said.

He identified the quarrying firm as Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., whose mineral production sharing agreement granted by the DENR in 1998 is now being looked into by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

In a recent area inspection, Cimatu, along with Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, removed and confiscated the barbed wires hammered into the Tibig

trees in the disputed area.

He blamed the quarrying firm for fencing off one-fourth of the 2,000-hectare ecotourism and conservation Masungi Geopark.

According to Cimatu, he has instructed the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to scrutinize the mineral production sharing agreements of another two quarrying firms—Quarry Rock Group Inc. and Quimson Limestone Inc., along Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., that have also been operating within the Upper Marikina River basin protected landscape using agreements issued in the late 1990s.

"This is a watershed, and also a protected area. We have already identified this as a protected area and these mining companies are within the protected area," Cimatu said.



Rizal quarry firm faces closure

MARIA ROMERO AND ELMER MANUEL
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A quarry operator is likely facing closure for encroaching into the Masungi Geopark in Baras town, Rizal Province, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said Wednesday.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said he will "close down and cancel the permit" of the quarry operator who illegally fenced off about a quarter of the 2,000-hectare eco-tourism and conservation site as its own.

The DENR identified the quarrying firm as Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., whose mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) granted in 1998 is now being looked into by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

Following this incident, Cimatu ordered the MGB to scrutinize the MPSA of two other quarrying firms – Quarry Rock Group Inc. and Quimson Limestone Inc. – who, along with Rapid City, are operating within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape using the MPSA they secured in late 1990s.



Quarry firm faces closure for encroaching on Rizal eco-tourism park

A QUARRYING firm is in big trouble for encroaching on an eco-tourism and conservation site in Rizal province.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu vowed to close down and cancel the permit of the quarry operator for fencing off a quarter of the Masungi Geopark in Baras.

Cimatu, who was joined by Undersecretary Benny Antiporda and other DENR officials in verifying the report, said he will summon the operator of Rapid City Realty and Development Corp. (RCDC) and give them notice of violation for intruding into the 2,000-hectare ecotourism site.

The official led in removing and seizing the barbed wire hammered into the Tibig trees in the area.

The DENR chief said that the RCRDC, whose mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) was granted by the DENR in 1998, is being looked into by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

Cimatu instructed the MGB to also scrutinize the MPSAs of two other quarrying firms— Quarry Rock

Group Inc., and Quimson Limestone Inc.—which along with Rapid City are operating within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape using the MPSAs they secured in the late 1990s.

"This is a watershed, and also a protected area. We have already identified this as a protected area and these mining companies are within the protected area," Cimatu said.

An MPSA has a validity of 25 years from the year it was granted. Since Rapid City's MPSA will soon expire and is subject for renewal, Cimatu said the fencing off might be intended for the expansion of the quarry operator's property.

Cimatu, however, promised not to allow any more extension of the quarry operator's contract.

"The company's MPSA is due for renewal that's why it is expanding. I'm sure it would seek for extension of the MPSA, but I will not allow anymore extension here," Cimatu said.

"In fact, I'm even considering a closure of this MPSA. There is no such thing that we will allow a mining company—either metallic or non-metallic—to have mining operations in this area," he added.

Cimatu directed Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officer Isidro Mercado to expedite the establishment of a satellite office in Masungi Geopark to strengthen the protection of the nature park and surrounding protected areas.

Joel dela Torre



Quarry operator sa Rizal ipasasara ni Cimatú

Ipinahayag ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatú na kanyang ipasasara at ikakansela ang permit ng isang quarry operator sa Masungi Geopark sa Baras, Rizal.

"Bukod sa pagsasara, tatawagin namin sila at bibigyan ng notice of violation kaugnay sa kanilang ginawa," ayon kay Cimatú.

Nabatid na personal na nagtungo sa nasabing lugar si Cimatú noong Lunes para kumpirmahin ang quarrying operation ng Rapid City Realty and Development Corporation na binakuran ang may 2,000 hektaryang ecotourism at conservation site.

Pinatanggal ni Cimatú at sinamsam ang mga barbed wire na ikinabit sa mga puno ng tibig sa lugar.

Napag-alaman na ang Mineral Production Sharing Agreement

(MPSA) ng nasabing kompanya ay iginawad ng DENR noong 1998. Tinitingnan na ito ngayon ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

Samantala, sinabi ni Cimatú na inutusan din niya ang MGB para suriin din ang MPSA ng dalawa pang quarry operator — ang Quarry Rock Group Inc. at Quimson Limestone Inc. — na kasama ng Rapid City ay nagpapatok sa loob ng Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape gamit ang mga MPSA na kanilang nakuha noon pang 1990s.

(Riz Dominguez)



CIMATU MOVES TO SAVE MASUNGI GEOPARK PROJECT - Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (right) oversees the removal of the barbed wires that fenced off part of the Masungi Georeserve Park, a watershed and protected area in Baras, Rizal. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda (middle) led the removal of the wires that were reportedly put up by a quarrying company to expand its operation in the area. Cimatu visited the site on March 4 and vowed to close down and cancel the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) of the quarry operator that was granted by the DENR in 1998.



Amid COVID, wildlife laws to be strictly enforced

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and concerned agencies will strictly enforce wildlife laws in the country to prevent human and wildlife interaction in the wake of the coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak, a DENR official said Tuesday.

Earlier reports noted there were indications that the COVID-19 outbreak stemmed from a virus found in wildlife sold for consumption.

Director Ricardo Calderon of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau said there will be stricter enforcement including conservation of habitat of these wildlife.

"The eating of exotic wildlife species will also be covered since this is a criminal act and therefore, punishable under the law. There is a need to influence consumer behavior as well as reduce demand for illegally sourced wildlife and their products," the official said on the occasion of World Wildlife Day held at the BMB Training Center at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City.

Partner agencies in the enforcement of wildlife laws include the Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation and Bureau of Customs.

"We elevated the problem of illegal wildlife trade to the category of transnational crime, the same level as that of trafficking of persons, illegal drugs, anti-money laundering. The penalty now should be higher and more serious compared to what was imposed before which is six months to one year imprisonment being the maximum," Calderon said, adding the relatively lax punishment was hardly a deterrent.

The official said that they are working to amend the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act (Republic Act No. 9147) – a law providing for the conservation

and protection of wildlife resources and their habitats, appropriating funds for this as well as for other purposes.

"We want to stress that the fight against illegal wildlife trade is now a level higher than how it used to be. Our law enforcement agents will be more visible and vigilant in our seaports and airports," Calderon said.

He added that the BMB is coor-

inating with the Department of Budget and Management regarding the increased budget for their personnel in the frontline enforcement offices, including the Protected Area Management Office to better manage conservation habitats.

Calderon also bared a new digital tool called "WildALERT" developed by the DENR-BMB and USAID, to help department frontliners and law enforcement partners in the fight against wildlife trafficking.

The WildALERT system is made up of a mobile interface, species library, and a report management platform that will aid users in identifying wildlife species, report-

ing wildlife crimes, and managing reports submitted from the field.

It is an easily accessible offline digital reference for DENR personnel and law enforcers to help them correctly identify various species of wildlife.

According to the USAID, WildALERT has now 480 species in its library, which is easily searchable using the app's filtering tool.

"Wildlife law enforcers can report poachers, trafficking, and illegal trade of wildlife using WildALERT. Through the app's reporting feature, photos and key information can be recorded, geotagged and submitted to the WildALERT report management platform."



App developer John Calanday demonstrates at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife on Tuesday how to use WildALERT, a new digital tool developed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Biodiversity Management Bureau and USAID to help DENR frontliners and law enforcement partners in the fight against wildlife trafficking. MICHAEL VARGAS



Tourism industry 'bleeding' from COVID-19

By MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO
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Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

W'ERE bleeding." Thus was the lament of Tourism Congress of the Philippines President Jose C. Clemente III in a press briefing Wednesday, as he described the impact of the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak on the country's tourism industry.

He acknowledged that many tourism stakeholders, such as hotels and resorts, have already asked some of their staff to take their forced leaves while guests were still minimal, due to the travel bans on China, Hong Kong and Macau.

"A few tour operators who are dependent on the Chinese market have also temporarily suspended operations," he added.

Unfortunately, he noted, "the markets we thought would hold out [like Europe and North America] are also canceling their visits [to the Philippines]." He cited his own company, Rajah Tours Philippines, which has to refund P2 million to a 33-person group from Stanford University who canceled their tour to the Philippines slated next week, owing to COVID-19 concerns.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat, for her part, said the raw data they received from the Bureau of Immigration showed a 41.4-percent drop in foreign arrivals in February, compared to February 2019. January 2020 still posted an 9.8-percent increase in foreign arrivals, however.

Also, based on reports from the Department of Tourism's (DOT's) regional offices, she said hotels and resorts in Boracay Island have recorded a 40-percent drop in occupancy; those in Cebu, a 27-percent dip; and in Bohol, a 40-percent decrease, as well.

DOT data showed there were 138,737 foreign tourists in Boracay alone, for January and February, a substantial 36-percent drop from the arrivals in the same period last year of 216,756. For domestic travelers, however, there was a 6.3-percent increase to 117,359 arrivals in the first two months of the year, compared to 110,406 arrivals in the same period in 2019.

Romulo Puyat convened the Tourism Coordinating Council (TCC) on Wednesday to discuss ways for government agencies to work together and cushion the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry. Other Cabinet secretaries who attended the TCC were Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Silvestre Bello III of the Department of Labor and Employment.

At the meeting, the TCP submitted its "wish list" of measures that government can implement to help alleviate the current plight of the tourism sector. Among these are:

- Waiving of airport terminal fees;
- Discounted landing and parking fees for airlines "to keep their costs low and pass on savings to consumers;"
- Temporary waiving of visa fees for countries that still need to pay them when their residents head to the Philippines;
- Temporary deferment of applicable taxes on designated stakeholders for a predetermined period of time;
- Low-interest loans or credit facilities which can be tapped by stakeholders in a "precarious position," subject to their eligibility; among others.

Romulo Puyat told the BUSINESSMIRROR, the TCC "will definitely endorse everything" on the TCP's wish list, adding she will discuss with Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III those items that will need his concurrence, such as proposed tax breaks. "But for some taxes imposed by the municipalities, I've already spoken with the League of Municipalities of the Philippines to take a look at what they can defer imposing," to help out the tourism stakeholders in their respective areas, she said.

As this developed, the DOT is allocating some P6 billion in funds "that will span international and domestic promotions, infrastructure, and regional tourism development," boosting its partnership with the tourism sector, and help speed up their recovery from the COVID-19 impact. Romulo Puyat said these funds are cobbled from existing budgets from its various offices like the Tourism Promotions Board, etc.

Among the programs and projects to be funded this year are: development of new campaign for domestic travel, P421 million; creation of "engaging content," targeting emerging markets unaffected by COVID-19, P467 million; participation in international travel shows and market development initiatives, P725 million; waiving of participation fees in international travel trade shows for the private sector, P11.2 million; night-rating of secondary airports, P1.6 billion; training, orientation, response and protocols for COVID-19 preparedness, P850 million; assistance for LGU's developing tourism masterplans, P400 million; and LGU-identified resilient infrastructure development and expansion projects, P2.28 billion.



NWRB: Brace for water rationing this summer

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) yesterday urged the public to conserve water as service interruptions will be implemented in some parts of Metro Manila with the likelihood of a decline of the water level in Angat Dam in the summer months.

NWRB Executive Director Sevilla David Jr. appealed for public understanding stressing the decrease in water pressure and rotational water service interruptions or rationing are necessary to avert severe water shortage during the dry season.

Earlier reports said the NWRB has maintained the water allocation in Metro Manila at 42 cubic meters per second. Metro Manila's regular water allocation is 46 cubic meters per second.

David noted that Angat Dam has not reached the target water level of 212 meters at the end of 2019.

He added that due to the effects of El Niño phenomenon last year, the water level in Angat dipped to 157 meters which is the lowest in 2019.

Earlier, the NWRB reduced by as much as 13 percent the volume of water allotted daily to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

David explained the water supply to MWSS will be adjusted further once the water level at Angat Dam hits the critical 160 meters.

Angat Dam supplies 96 percent of Metro Manila's water requirement.

The adjustment will affect the supply of water concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad Water which will have an impact on their concession areas.

Aside from Manila Water and Maynilad, the Bulacan concessionaire will also be affected by the decrease in water allocation.



Tubig sa Metro Manila, irarasyon

Hinikayat kahapon ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ang publiko na magtipid ng tubig dahil ipatutupad ang service interruptions sa ilang bahagi ng Metro Manila sa posibleng pagbaba ng water level sa Angat Dam ngayong summer months.

Umapela si NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr. ng pang-unawa ng publiko iginigiti na kailangan ang pagbaba ng water pressure o rotational water service interruptions para maiwasan ang matinding water shortage sa tag-araw.

Maalala na pinanatili ng NWRB ang paglalaan ng tubig sa Metro Manila sa 42 cubic metro bawat segundo.

Ang regular water allocation ng

Metro Manila ay 46 cubic meters per second.

Nabanggit ni David na hindi naabot ng Angat Dam ang target na antas ng tubig na 212 metro sa pagtatapos ng 2019.

Ang Angat Dam ang nagsusuplay ng 96 na porsiyento ng water requirement ng Metro Manila.

Maaapektuhan ng adjustment ang supply ng water concessionaires na Manila Water at Maynilad Water na magkakaroon ng epekto sa kanilang concession areas.

Bukod sa Manila Water at Maynilad, maaapektuhan din ang Bulacan concessionaire ng pagbaba ng water allocation.

Chito Chavez



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TITLE: Marinduque's rivers up for rehab

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Marinduque's rivers up for rehab

**Environment department allots initial P5M to revive waterways
destroyed by 1996 mine accident**

By Maricar Cinco
@maricarcincoINQ

A heavily silted Mogpog River, groaning under "hundreds of millions" of tons of low grade ore and mine tailings, has caught the government's attention anew, as local officials and a civil society group underscore the much-needed rehabilitation of Marinduque province's river system.

Years of heavy rainfall and surface runoff have caused heavy siltation in the Mogpog River that cuts through 13 villages in Mogpog town.

Most parts of the river have now become too shallow to hold water, resulting in massive flooding in nearby communities during typhoons.

"It is a dead river," said Rommel Fernandez, Marinduque's provincial legal officer.

Mountain of waste

Like its twin, the Boac River, which passes through the capital Boac town, the Mogpog River drains into the Tablas Strait. Upstream, it leads to the San Antonio pit, which used to be a mine depository of the defunct Marcopper Mining Corp.

Several issues arise from the abandoned pit that has now



MINE TRAGEDY The 1996 Marcopper mine accident spelled doom for the Boac River, now a dead and heavily silted waterway. At right, an environmental group says the abandoned Maguila-guila Dam in Mogpog town never served its purpose to stop river siltation. —PHOTOS BY RICHARD A. REYES AND MARINDUQUE COUNCIL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

become a mere "mountain of waste" on the verge of collapse.

"It is mountain-like, an accumulation of low grade ore," said Roland de Jesus, director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) region, referring to rocks from which minerals, like copper, have yet to be extracted.

But Elizabeth Manggol of the nongovernment Marin-

duque Council for Environmental Concerns (Macec) said the San Antonio dump also contained toxic mine tailings.

During Marcopper's operation, the company had constructed the Maguila-guila Dam to collect mine waste from the San Antonio pit and prevent its spill-off into the Mogpog River and into the sea.

But the dam partly gave way in December 1993, three years

prior to the 1996 major mine accident when Marcopper's drainage tunnel burst, unleashing at least 200 million tons of tailings into the Boac River.

The 1996 accident forced the Canadian firm to shut its operation in the Philippines.

The Marinduque government had filed a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against Marcopper, only to see the case thrown out by a court in the United States for rea-



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sons of technicality.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said he would issue a department administrative order to place the Mogpog and Boac rivers under rehabilitation, once the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) received a formal request from the provincial government.

"The environmental damage and unresolved issues brought about by the Marcopper mining operation in Marinduque for several decades now must be put to an end," he said during the centennial celebration of the province last month.

Long-term solutions

Cimatu said the planned river rehabilitation would include the dredging of the two rivers by a private contractor at no cost to the government. The contractor, he said, would shoulder all the expenses in exchange for whatever minerals it would recover, provided that it would pay the corresponding excise tax.

De Jesus said the mine tailings in the Boac River had already settled underwater that dredging, should it be an option, requires a careful environmental study.

"The [Maguila-guila Dam] never served its purpose to pre-

vent the [river] siltation. [The structure] is still there but as the MGB had said, it is in its worse condition," Manggol said, as her group called on the government for "long-term solutions."

In recent years, the MGB had traced "leaks" on the Maguila-guila Dam.

"It's full to the brim. It's not working [as a dam] anymore because of nonmaintenance," De Jesus said.

The provincial government in February formed a technical working group with the MGB and Macec to review its legal options and to come up with recommendations, among them river dredging and the construction of a gabion dam.

The 90-meter wide gabion dam, to be constructed 2 kilometers from Maguila-guila, is just a "stopgap" measure to filter the debris from spilling into the rest of the Mogpog River, the DENR said.

Cimatu had recently approved the release of P5 million to jumpstart the river restoration, although this was only intended for technical studies.

"The actual construction [of a gabion dam] will cost millions of pesos," De Jesus said. —WITH A

REPORT FROM JHESSET O. ENANO INQ



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INQUIRER



TITLE: Marinduque rivers up for rehabilitation 3/3 PAGE 1/ 48

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Marinduque rivers up for rehabilitation

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is heeding calls to revive the rivers of Marinduque province, now considered biologically dead after tons of mine tailings flowed into the waterways in 1996. The agency promised an initial funding of P5 million to start the rehabilitation of the heavily silted Mogpog and Boac rivers, as local officials and advocates shed light on the much-needed environmental restoration. —STORY BY MARICAR CINCO

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UN asked to investigate deaths of environmental defenders

CLARK FREEPORT, Pampanga - The Ecumenical Voice for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (EcuVoice) urged members of the 43rd UN Human Rights Council to establish a "commission of inquiry" following reports that 157 "environmental defenders" have been killed, 11 in enforced disappearances, and 106 arrested on trumped-up charges under the Duterte government.

In a statement Tuesday from Geneva where the UN council is in session, environmental group Kalikasan coordinator Clemente Bautista said "there are serious challenges to life, security and liberty of environmental defenders in the Philippines, which redound to transgressions on the rights to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment of communities, including that of indigenous peoples and peasants."

He said that during the UN session, EcuVoice "appealed to member states to conduct an independent fact-finding mission or

establish a Commission of Inquiry in the Philippines to investigate the worsening human rights situation under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte, including attacks on environmental defenders."

Bautista noted that while the Philippines was cited in the UN event as one of 110 countries with legislation upholding the principles of the right to safe, healthy, clean and sustainable environment, "people's rights to a balanced and healthful ecology continue to be violated."

He said "the Philippines is identified as having one of the fastest rates of biodiversity loss in the world."

"In 2018, it was cited as the most dangerous place for environmental defenders by international watchdog Global Witness," Bautista noted.

The Philippine mission to the UN event cited laws such as the writ of kalikasan and establishment of green courts to hasten the process of environmental cases, but that these

have remained inadequate.

Bayan Muna Rep. Eufemia Cullamat, an indigenous Manobo leader, reported to the UN that most environmental defenders killed in the Philippines were indigenous peoples and peasants who were the frontliners protecting the country's forest and land resources.

"In the course of conserving our natural resources and defending communities from big mining companies, commercial loggers, and agro-corporations, indigenous peoples and peasants are targeted for extrajudicial executions and judicial harassment.

"Many of my fellow environmental defenders in Surigao del Sur are subject to trumped-up charges, while at least 60 families from the community where I came from in Lianga recently evacuated from their homes due to indiscriminate firing and relentless attacks by the military," Cullamat said.

- Ding Cervantes



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NO HUNTING, DUMPING OF WASTE

ARROCEROS NOW A PERMANENT FOREST PARK

By **Nikka G. Valenzuela**
@NikkaINQ

Threatened by redevelopment over the years, Arroceros Forest Park in Manila has been declared a permanent forest park by the city government.

Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso has signed Ordinance No. 8607 declaring the 2.1-hectare Arroceros a permanent forest park.

The declaration complies with Republic Act No. 5752, which mandates that cities or municipalities must develop, establish or maintain a forest or tree parks or watershed within public land.

The park by the Pasig Riv-



MANILA'S LUNGS Arroceros park's lush foliage provides a perfect backdrop for a music video shot by mass communication students from Far Eastern University on Wednesday. —**RICHARD REYES**

er has been threatened by City Hall plans to redevelop it.

Most recently, former Manila Mayor Joseph "Erap" Estrada planned to build a

university gymnasium on the property. Under former Mayor Lito Atienza's leadership, the park was threatened with demolition to give way to

the Department of Education Manila division's office and a dormitory for women.

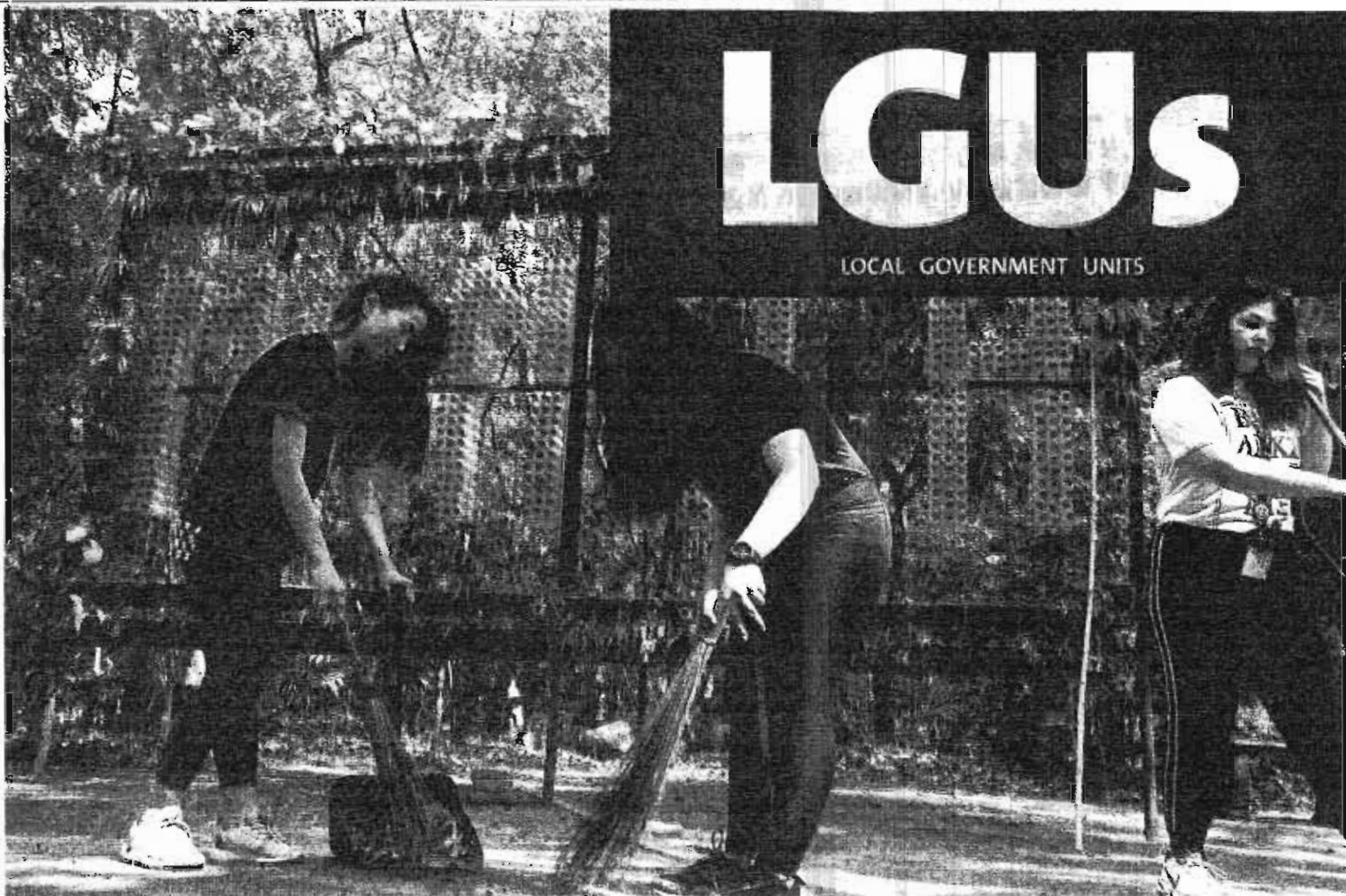
The development of Arroceros Forest Park started about 25 years ago when Winner Foundation forged an indefinite memorandum of agreement with the City of Manila.

The ordinance also mandated that the forest park be withdrawn from sale.

It also prohibited several activities in the area, like hunting, destroying of any plants or animals, dumping of waste, conducting or maintaining any kind of structure, fence or enclosures, among others. INQ



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LGUs

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

Student volunteers sweep the dried leaves at Arroceros Forest Park in Manila. On Tuesday, Manila Mayor Francisco 'Isko' Domagoso signed an ordinance making Arroceros a permanent forest park. **Norman Cruz**

Isko declares Arroceros 'permanent forest park'

By Willie Casas

MANILA Mayor Francisco "Isko" Domagoso has signed an ordinance declaring Arroceros Park, dubbed as the "last lung" of the capital, as a "permanent forest park."

Domagoso signed Ordinance No. 8607 on Tuesday, declaring the piece of land along Arroceros Street, formerly property of the Department of Education, as a permanent forest park.

In a statement released by the Manila Public Information Office, Domagoso said the local government will allocate P1 million for the park's operations.

"The use and enjoyment of the Arroceros Forest Park must be consistent with the principles of sustainable devel-

opment and the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology," the ordinance read.

Under the ordinance, cutting trees, dumping waste products, and any form of excavation within the area of the forest park are prohibited.

Violators will be fined P2,500 on first offense, P3,500 on their second offense, and P5,000 and/or imprisonment not exceeding one year depending on the court's discretion for the third offense.

The riverside park near Manila City Hall is home to some 3,000 species of birds and trees. The park was developed in 1993 but was closed to the public after portions of the area were occupied by informal settlers and gangsters.

The transformation of the park was one of Domagoso's campaign promises.

"Let's turn Manila into a green city," he said.

After winning the mayoral election in 2019, he vowed to preserve and improve recreational areas like zoos and parks in Manila City, after some city properties were rumored to be for sale.



Arroceros Park sa Maynila 'permanent forest park'

Lumagda sa isang ordinansa si Manila Mayor Francisco 'Isko Moreno' Domagoso para sa pagdeklara sa Arroceros Forest Park bilang "permanent forest park".

Batay sa Ordinance No. 8607, idineklara nang "permanent forest park" ang isang bahagi ng lupain sa Arroceros Street, na dating kilala bilang "Decs Property".

Maglalaan ng P1 milyon ang pamahalaang lungsod para sa operasyon ng parke.

Ayon kay Moreno, batay daw ito sa Republic Act No. 5752 kung saan nakasaad na dapat maglalaan at magmantina ng permanent forest, tree park o watershed sa mga pampublikong lupain.

Sa ordinansa, bawal ang pagpuputol ng puno, pagtatapon ng basura at paghuhukay sa loob ng forest park.

Pagmumultahin ang mga lalabag ng P2,500 hanggang P5,000 at/o pagkakulong na hindi lalagpas sa isang taon. **(Issa Santiago)**



(Jonas Sulit)



TITLE:

Dahil sa Climate Change 500,000 tahong naluto sa dagat

NADISKUBRE ni Brandon Ferguson ng New Zealand ang mahigit 500,000 tahong na patay na at naluto sa init ng dagat habang namamasyal ang New Zealander sa dalampasigan ng Maunganui Bluff sa North Island ng nasabing bansa.

Ayon sa pahayag ni Ferguson sa panayam ng *Business Insider*, nasakihan na niya ang ganitong uri ng pangyayari sa nabanggit na baybayin ngunit kakaibang species ng shellfish ang natagpuan niyang patay noong nakalipas na panahon.

Isang eksperto ang nagsabing ang mga tahong ay naluto sanhi ng mainit na klima at panahon bukod sa mid-day low tides na madalas maganap kamakailan sa New Zealand.

Nag-post si Ferguson ng video sa Facebook upang ipakita ang kanyang nadiskubre.

"I'm local to the area so I'm always out on 'the coast' gathering food for the family," aniya.

"That day I was out with friends and family while they were fishing. We waited for the tide to

turn so we could gather mussels," aniya.

Sa kabila na ang karamihan ng mga tahong ay naluto sa init ng dagat, marami rin ang nangangamoy na dahil sa pagkabulok matapos mangamatay sa kakaibang temperatura.

"It has happened in the past due to warm water temperatures, low mid-day tides, and high pressures," ani Ferguson.

Isang report noong 2019 mula sa New Zealand government ang sumuprta sa kanyang teorya na sadyang pinapainit ng climate change ang temperatura ng karagatan kaya malaki ang epekto nito sa native marine plant, animal at habitats ng New Zealand.

Ayon sa nasabing report, sa pagitan ng 1981

at 2018, tumaas ang overall sea-surface temperature sa apat na oceanic region ng New Zealand, kabilang ang Chatham Rise, ang Tasman Sea, subtropical at subantarctic sa pagitan ng 0.1 hanggang 0.2 degrees Celsius bawat dekada.

"New Zealand's oceans act like a giant sponge against the effects of climate change. It's likely our seas take up more carbon dioxide than our forests, but there is only so much they and the life in them can take — and the limits aren't yet known," paliwanag ni New Zealand secretary for the Environment Vicky Robertson sa nasabing report.

(Kinalap ni TRACY CABRERA)





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KAILANGAN ANG AKSYON NI SECRETARY TUGADE

HINDI naman siguro papayag itong si Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade na hindi aksyunan ang reklamo ng CARTESY German, manufacturer ng motor vehicle inspection tools, sa paggamit ng pangalan nito ng isang kumpanya na kasalukuyang katransaksyon ng Land Transportation Office (LTO) simula pa noong 2010 dahil ito'y malinaw na "gross violation of proprietary and copyright laws."

Ayon sa reklamo nito kay Secretary Tugade, walang permiso sa kanila ang Chinese-owned Cartesy o Cartesykj Diagnostic Technology Co., LTD., LED na gamitin ang kanilang pangalan bukod pa rito na wala naman silang corporate office sa Pilipinas.

Lumalabas ay alam ng ahensya, na kasalukuyang pinamumunuan ni ret. Gen. Edgar Galvante, na peke ang katransaksyon nito pero tila tahimik lang ang liderato nito, bakit kaya?

Anomalya ngang maituturing kung gumamit lang ng pangalan ng ibang kompanya para makapagnegosyo ang mga negosyanteng Intsik dito sa ating bansa partikular na sa LTO.

Aba'y malinaw na may korapsyon at kutsabahan sa LTO dahil 'di puwedeng magkumuwang mga ogag lang ang mga tiwaling opisyal ng ahensya para magpatuloy ang operasyon ng Cartesy sa pagsasagawa ng testing at sertipikasyon ng motor vehicles na "safe and road worthy?"

Kailangan ang agarang aksyon dito ng DOTr chief para matukoy ang mga korap sa LTO at kung may mangyaring masama sa mga sasakyang sinertipikahan ng pagiging "road worthy" ng kuwestyunableng Chinese-owned Cartesy ay baka sa CARTESY German isisi ang 'krimen.'

**94.2% SA MANILA BAY
CLEAN-UP COMPLIANCE**

Nakatanggap ang pamahalaang lungsod ng Navotas kamakailan ng 94.2% na marka sa 2019 Assessment of Compliance of Local Government Units to Manila Bay Clean-up, Rehabilitation and Preservation Program.

Kasama ang lungsod sa top five na LGUs na nagtaguyod ng Supreme Court mandamus na nag-uutos sa mga ahensya ng gobyerno na linisin, ayusin at ipreserba ang Manila Bay at ibalik ang water quality nito para pwede nang paglanguyan o gamitin sa contact recreation.

"Ang pangingsda ang ating pangunahing pinagkukunan ng kabuhayan at bilang fishing community, dapat binibigyan natin ng lubos na pagpapahalaga ang kalusugan at kondisyon ng ating mga dagat at ilog," paghihikayat ni Mayor Toby Tiangco sa mga barangay official.

Dagdag pa nito: "May mga polisiya at programa tayo para mapanatiling malinis ang ating mga dagat at ilog at ibalik ang water quality nito sa swimming level. Ngunit, kailangan natin ang suporta at pakikilahok ng lahat para magtagumpay ang mga polisiya at programang ito."

Aktibo rin itong nakikilahok sa Battle for Manila Bay Clean-up Drive at nakakolekta ito ng 2,267,067 kilo ng basura noong Enero-Disyembre 2019.



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Wasted consultancies

ON THE CONTRARY



ANTONIO CONTRERAS

THERE has been an aversion to the word "consultant" in public discourse. It has been associated with a highly paid superfluity, of an unnecessary expense, of being imposed by foreign funding agencies. It has also been associated with corruption, with public officials using it as a blanket label for those unqualified relatives, friends and supporters that they hire. The Commission on Audit (CoA) has repeatedly red-flagged the expenses incurred to pay for these kinds of services.

But, to label all consultants in this manner is an unfair generalization. There are consultants that are highly qualified for the work they have been contracted to perform, as there are consultancies that are necessary to provide a more objective and scientific perspective on a technical issue for which bureaucrats would have inherent limitations to fully, and authentically, address. So that if there's anything that needs to be critically reformed, it is the manner in which line agencies have treated consultancies and consultants. And it goes deep into the attitudes of these career bureaucrats toward change.

I can always cite my own per-

sonal experience as a testimony to this sad reality. In 2015, I was contracted by the Forestry Management Bureau (FMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for three kinds of consultancy work as an institutional development specialist. In one contract, I was tasked to evaluate the staffing pattern of the FMB in the context of the rationalization of the structure of the DENR. I proposed a redeployment and restructuring of people, as well as tasks to the different units of the department.

In another consultancy work, I was tasked to develop of multi-stakeholder protocol to enable the streamlining of the different developmental interventions, often leading to a serious overlapping of functions, in three watersheds in Regions 2, 3 and 6. The goal was to enable a more functional interphase among the different stakeholders in the management of these watersheds.

Finally, and perhaps the broadest work I rendered, because of its national scope, was when I was contracted by FMB through a technical assistance from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit or GIZ, a German bilateral funding agency, to lead a team of one Filipino sociologist and a German land tenure specialist, to conduct a review of all the land tenure instruments in forest lands. Our team submitted a comprehensive policy review and proposed a single land tenure system that would harmonize all these tenure instruments into one land management agreement. We also prepared a draft executive order to harmonize the land tenure system in forestlands in the country.

I have learned that the multi-stakeholder platforms I developed is now being used to guide the work of the present consultant. And recently, I have been informed that my recommendations for organizational reforms at FMB is now being revisited after almost half a decade. However, the proposal for a unified land and environmental resources management agreement (Lerma) has not been given serious thought and

appears to have been lost along the way while the DENR underwent management change.

One of the charges hurled at consultants is that we are locked in our academic ivory towers and tend to recommend policies that are too theoretical and ideal to implement. However, it must be pointed out that all the three contracts that I have enumerated involved extensive fieldwork where data was gathered from the field, and from interviews and focus group discussions. Validation workshops were held where preliminary results were presented to all stakeholders, including the implementing agencies.

The recommendation on the organizational structure of FMB was even crafted with the direct participation of the leadership and rank and file of the bureau. And the Lerma was presented to FMB and other concerned agencies both within and outside DENR in more than one instance for comments and suggestions, and these were all integrated in the draft. In fact, the Society of Filipino Foresters, in a plenary in its annual convention in 2015 held

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Wasted consultancies

in Laoag City, passed a resolution endorsing the adoption of Lerma.

Indeed, CoA is correct in calling out the wastage of government resources when consultancy reports end up as just that, as mere reports that are not implemented, or are ignored. Government funds, some of which come from foreign loans and grants, are wasted in the process, not necessarily due to corruption but due to bureaucratic inertia and inaction. The consultancy work that I rendered that resulted in multi-stakeholder protocols in Regions 2, 3 and 6 was in connection with the Forestland Management Project that was funded by a loan from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. The one that led to Lerma, meanwhile, was a result of a bilateral grant from Germany through GIZ.

There are many reasons why government agencies do not implement the recommendations emanating from consultants. There would be issues of turf, where the consultants' recommendations are seen as threats to sitting officials by effectively altering the scope of their author-

ity. There may also be issues about convenience and risk aversion. Government functionaries are already used to repetitive procedures, and they see any changes as threats not only to their comfort zones, but as a burden in the form of unlearning old protocols and learning new ones.

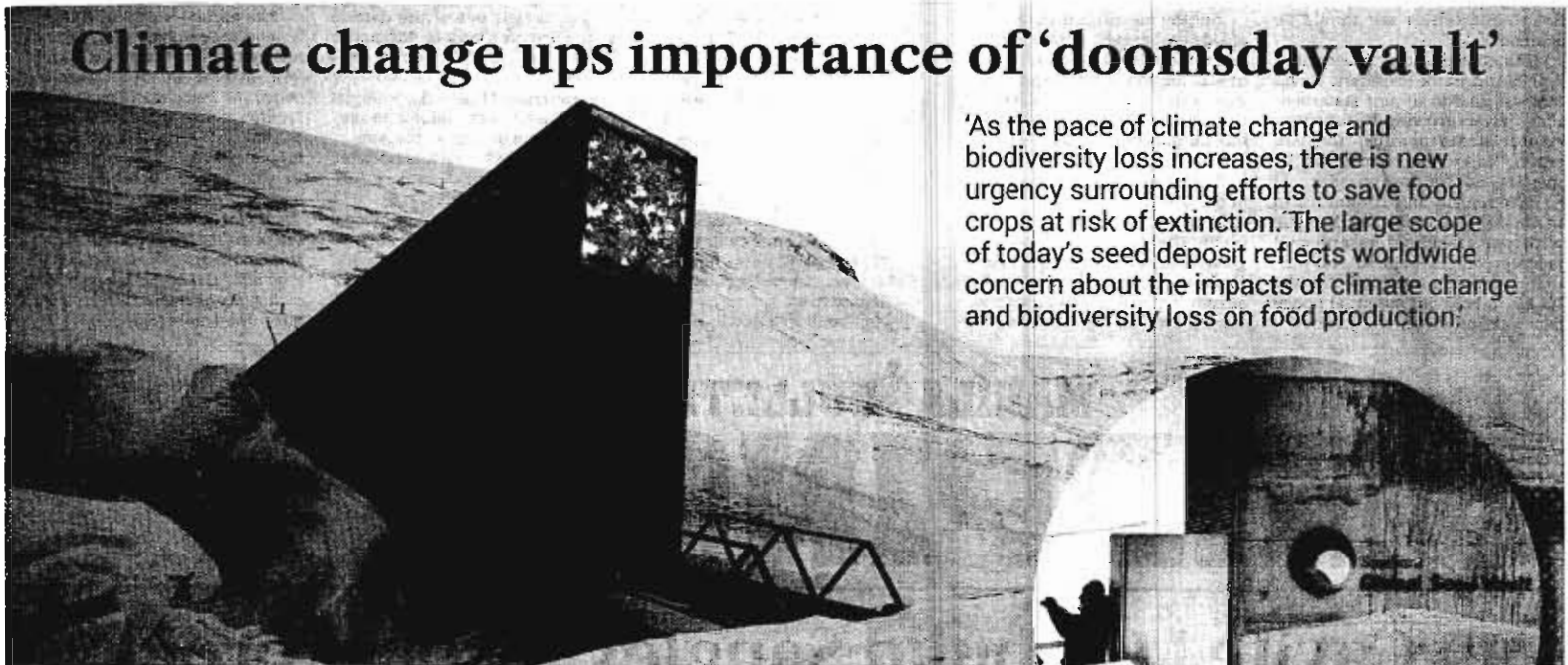
And there is the feeling of resentment among government functionaries whose salaries are much lower than the professional fees of most consultants. Indeed, some consultants' fees are higher than the salary grade of their agency counterparts, but for some this may be because the rates would be inclusive of operational expenses.

It is nevertheless but fair that consultants are paid for doing honest work. What is not fair is when the results of such work funded by public money are relegated to the dustbins of filing cabinets or stored in some hard drive in the planning units of government agencies. And having a government bureaucracy that is bereft of a culture of change and innovation is not fair to the country and its future.



Climate change ups importance of 'doomsday vault'

'As the pace of climate change and biodiversity loss increases, there is new urgency surrounding efforts to save food crops at risk of extinction. The large scope of today's seed deposit reflects worldwide concern about the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on food production.'



A "doomsday vault" nestled deep in the Arctic received 60,000 new seed samples recently, including Prince Charles' cowslips and Cherokee sacred corn, increasing stocks of the world's agricultural bounty in case of global catastrophe.

Mounting concern over climate change and species loss is driving groups worldwide to add their seeds to the collection inside a mountain near Longyearbyen on Spitsbergen Island in Norway's Svalbard archipelago, about 1,300 kilometers from the North Pole.

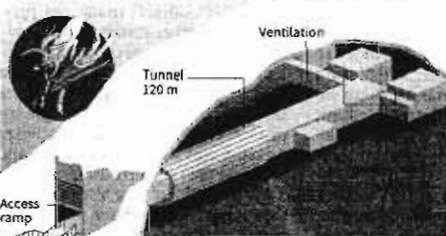
The "Noah's Ark" of food crops is set up to preserve plants that can feed a growing population facing climate change.

"As the pace of climate change and biodiversity loss increases, there is new urgency surrounding efforts to save food crops at risk of extinction," said Stefan Schmitz, who manages the reserve as head of the Crop Trust. "The large scope of today's seed deposit reflects worldwide concern about the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on food production."

The head of the genetic bank

The Noah's Ark of plants

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault contains 1.05 million seed samples



Cost 9 million dollars
Capacity 4.5 million seed varieties

- Aim: safeguard genetic crop diversity in the event of a global catastrophe
- Carved under the permafrost (permanently frozen ground)
- Located 130 m above the current sea level, to ensure the vault survives if the Arctic ice melts
- Seed samples are the property of the states and institutions that deposited them in the vault



of the Nordic nations, Lise Lykke Steffensen, said every single seed in the vault "holds potential solutions for sustainable agriculture."

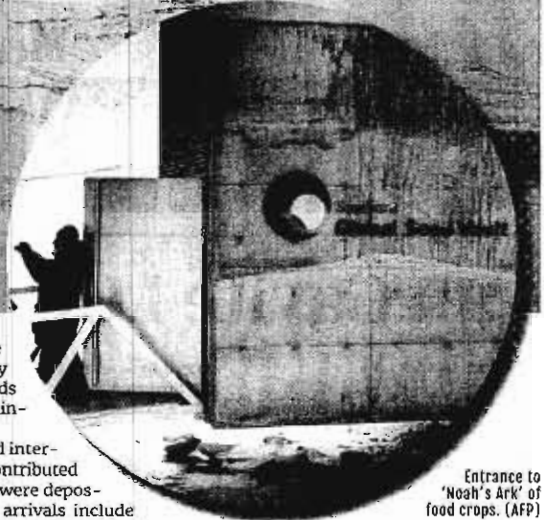
A total of 36 regional and international institutions have contributed to the 60,000 samples that were deposited on Tuesday. The new arrivals include staple crops such as wheat and rice, as well as wild varieties of European apple trees.

Also among the seeds are beans, squash, and corn from the Cherokee Nation - the first Native American group to send crops to the vault - including their sacred White Eagle corn.

Britain's Prince Charles, who is known for his environmental advocacy, sent the seeds of 27 wild plants, including cowslips and orchids collected from the meadows of Highgrove, his country home.

"It has proved to be an exhausting and often demoralizing task to persuade people of the utterly essential role played by all this diversity in maintaining vibrant, healthy ecosystems that sustain both people and our planet," the Prince of Wales said. "It's more urgent than ever that we act now to protect this diversity before it really is too late."

The latest shipment will bring the number of seed varieties, stored in three underground



Entrance to 'Noah's Ark' of food crops. (AFP)

alcoves at an optimum minus 18 degrees Celsius, to 1.05 million. The seed bank has the capacity to hold up to 4.5 million samples.

Little betrays the huge size of this granary for humanity on the icy mountainside except for its distinctive entrance: two towering gray walls emerging from the bowels of earth, topped with mirrors and pieces of iron creating a reflection that glimmers in the darkness of the polar winter.

The seed store was launched in 2008 with financing from Norway with the aim of safeguarding biodiversity in the face of climate change, wars, and other natural and man-made disasters, earning it the nickname "doomsday vault."

Its usefulness was spotlighted during Syria's civil war when researchers were able in 2015 to retrieve from the vault duplicates of grains lost in the destruction of Aleppo. (AFP)



TITLE:

GAANO ba kahanda ang mga Pinoy na doktor, nars at iba pang medical practitioner na humarap sa nakahahawa at riakamatay na COVID-19?

Tinatanong natin ito sa harap ng paglabas ng mga ulat na meron nang 13 doktor at nars ang namamatay sa nasabing sakit.

MGA BIKTIMA

Heto, mga Bro, ang listahan ng mga doktor, pwera nars, na namatay.

Si Dr. Liu Zhiming, 51 anyos, na naging direktor o pinuno mismo ng Wuchang Hospital, 51

Pinamatanda si Dr. Liang Wudong sa edad ana 62.

Namatay rin si Dr. Jiang Xueqing, 55, pinuno ng thyroid at breast surgery sa isa ring ospital sa Wuhan.

Kasama sa mga namatay sina Dr. Mei Zhongming, 57; whistle-blower doctor na si Li Wenliang, 33; Dr. Xia Sisi, 29, gastro-enterologist at Dr. Peng Yinhua, 29.

Kung papansinin ninyo, mga Bro, pawang malulusog at karamihan bata ang mga namatay na doktor.

Sinasabing karaniwang mga may edad at dati nang may iniindang sakit ang madaling kapitan ng COVID-19 saka mamatay.

PAANO NAMATAY?

Marami ang dahilan.

Una, sinasabing pagod na pagod at puyat na puyat hanggang nanghina sa katawan ang mga doktor.

Ikalawa, karamihan sa mga ito ang nahawa sa sirnula pa lamang dahil hindi kaagad na nakapagsuot ang mga ito ng Personal Protective Equipment na binubuo ng mga N95 face mask, gloves, kapote, boots at iba pa.

Ikatlo, wala pang nakatitiyak noon na talagang nakamamatay ang sakit at isang uri ng deadly na corona virus ang COVID-19 na tila pinagsama umanong Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome at Middle East Respiratory Syndrome.

Ikaapat at pinakamafindi sa lahat, sapilitang silang nahawa dahil sila ang nasa gitna ng laban sa sakit, araw at gabi, simula nang pumutok ang sakit sa Disyembre 2019 hanggang sa kasalukuyan.

Iti lang nagdaang mga araw ang pinakahuling namatay na si Zhongming na isang ophthalmologist at dabarkads ni whistle-blower Li Wenliang.

USA, ITALY, S. KOREA, CHINA

Pawang malalakas at mayayaman ang mga bansang ito kaya naman kum-



ULTIMATUM

ni BENNY ANTIPORDA

13 DOKTOR, NARS PATAY SA COVID-19; SA PILIPINAS?

pleto at napakamoderno ang mga kagamitang pang-ospital at pang-doktor nila at may magagandang gamot.

'Yun bang — wala ka nang masasabi pa sa sistemang pangkalusugan ng mga ito.

Pero nasisingitan sila ng COVID-19 at problemang malaki nila ngayon ang dumaraming kamatayan sa sakit.

Ang USA, may 9 nang patay; Italy - 79; South Korea -28; at China - 3,000.

Habang sinasabing bumababa ang bilang ng mga nahahawa at namamatay sa China, nabibilis namang nagaganap ang kabaligtaran nito sa nasa 60 bansa na ngayon, kasama ang USA, South Korea at Italy.

Wala namang nakatitiyak na hindi ito magaganap sa Pilipinas sa rami ng mga Pinoy na umuwi mula sa nasabing 60 bansang may COVID-19.

Pwera pa ang mga dayuhan na may hawak ng permanent visa mula sa ating pamahalaan.

NAKAPANININDIG-BALAHIBO

Alam ba ninyong nakapaninindig-balahibo ang posibilidad na kaunti lang sa mga doktor, nars at iba pang medical professional natin ang handang lumaban sa COVID-19?

At maaaring ganito rin ang kalagayan ng mga ospital sa bansa.

Nagaganap kasi ang mga ito mismo sa England na pinsok na rin ng sakit.

Sa survey sa nasa 1,600 doktor, walo lang ang nagsabing hindi handa ang National Health Service na lumaban sa sakit.

Ang NHS ang pinakamalaking health provider sa nasabing bansa para sa mga single taxpayer at pinopondohan at pinatatakbo ng pamahalaan.

Kabilang sa mga pinakamalaking kakulangan ang pagkakaroon ng napakaliit na bilang ng mga doktor at nars at kakaunting mga ospital na pupwedeng doon ilagay ang maraming pasyenteng may COVID-19.

Dahil dito, punuan ang mga ospital ng NHS sa ngayon at kakaunti ang nag-aasikaso sa mga pasyente.

SA PILIPINAS?

Hindi natin matatawaran

ang pagiging Good Samaritan ng mga doktor at nars na Pinoy.

Ang katotohanan, marami sa mga ito ang nagse-serbisyo nang libre o kauntlang ang singil sa mga mahihirap.

Pero paano ang mga doktor at nars natin sa mga pampublikong ospital na masasabi nating katumbas ng NHS sa England?

Hindi ba maraming public hospital na kakaunti ang doktor at nars?

At kung marami ang mga nakaputi na umikot sa mga ospital na ito ay dahil mga "On the Job Training" na doktor at nars.

CONSUELO DE BOBO

Muli, masasabi nating talagang maraming Good Samaritan sa mga medical professional natin.

Pero paano kung sa COVID-19 sila ihaharap?

Gaano sila kahanda sa personal na lebel na maaari silang magkasakit at mamatay?

Aminin man o hindi ng mga doktor, marami sa kanila ang mas gustong magkamal ng malalaking halaga ng salapi sa pang-gagamot kaysa magserbisyo nang libre.

Consuelo de bobo ang lakad ng mga ito sa mga libreng serbisyo at ang totoo, dito sila nangangalapan ng mga pasyente na pupwede nilang pagkakitaan.

Mataasahan ba ang mga ito na makibaka sa COVID-19 na nangangalangan ng mga katakot-takot na oras at 24/7 na sakripisyo?

At maaaring madamay ang buong pamilya, lalo na kung may halo nang kamatayan?

Sana naman, hindi biguin ng mga doktor, nars at iba pang medical professional natin ang mga mamatayan na mangangailangan ng lubos na tulong sakaling umatake ang COVID-19 sa bansa ng katulad sa ibang bansa.

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