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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



DENR, LLDA shut down 5 business firms in Pasay

By Rio N. Araja

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources and its attached agency, Laguna Lake Development Authority, have shut down five commercial establishments in Pasay City that were found to be discharging untreated wastewater into Manila Bay.

Undersecretary Benny Antiporda identified the five establishments as Zhi-Brothers Restaurant, Ocean Bay Restaurant, Da Rae Jung Korean Restaurant, Song Do Won Restaurant and BHP1 Autoworks which were found to have violated Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 2004.

Antiporda himself led the serving of the cease-and-desist orders with the help of the Pasay City government, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and Philippine National Police's Maritime Group.

During previous inspections, the LLDA discovered that the sewer lines of the five establishments were not con-

nected to the sewage treatment plant of their lessor, HK Sun Plaza.

HK Sun Plaza is owned by Social Security System Investment Property Department and has built its own P10-million STP in compliance with the cease-and-desist orders issued by the LLDA in February 2019 for its illegal wastewater discharge.

Five out of the 48 establishments at HK Sun Plaza were found to be discharging their wastewater to the storm drainage which emptied to Libertad Channel and drains into Manila Bay.

Only wastewater that has passed through the STP can be discharged to Libertad Channel.

Antiporda scolded the erring establishments for "exceeding what the law has set in terms of the waste they generate."

"We cannot sacrifice our environment for their business," Antiporda said. "They cannot violate the law and abuse our environment and natural resources for their own gain."

He also hit the establishments for trying to jeopardize the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"No matter how much effort we give in cleaning the Manila Bay, nothing will happen if we allow these errant business owners to do what they are doing," he said.

He reminded business owners of their duty to religiously comply with existing environmental laws and regulations.

"We are calling out the attention of business owners, not only around Manila Bay, but all over the country to check on their environmental compliance," he said.



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Establishments polluting Manila Bay shutdown

BY EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) had shut down five commercial establishments found to be discharging untreated waste water into Manila Bay.

Representatives from the joint task force led by the DENR and LLDA, the local government of Pasay City, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the Philippine National Police Maritime Group served the cease

and desist orders to four restaurants and one auto shop located at HK Sun Plaza along Macapagal Boulevard.

These establishments were Zhi-Brothers Restaurant, Ocean Bay Restaurant, Da Rae Jung Ko-

rean Restaurant, Song Do Won Restaurant and BHP1 Autoworks.

They were found violating provisions of Republic Act 9275, or the "Philippine Clean Air Act of 2004," which prohibits the discharging or disposing of any pollutant to water bodies.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns undersecretary, chided the erring establishments for "exceeding what the law has set in terms of the waste they generate," jeopardizing efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

"No matter how much effort we

give in cleaning the Manila Bay, nothing will happen if we allow these errant business owners to do what they are doing," he said.

The DENR official reminded business owners to religiously comply with environmental laws and regulations.

"We are calling out the attention of business owners not only around Manila Bay, but all over the country to check on their environmental compliance," he said, adding that the DENR was willing to provide technical assistance or advice to businesses in order to comply with environmental rules and guidelines.



Govt padlocks 5 more Manila Bay polluters

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

@jonlmayuga

RESUMING the campaign against establishments dirtying Manila Bay, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) have padlocked five commercial establishments for violating the Clean Water Act.

The DENR and LLDA, together with the local government of Pasay City, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and the Philippine National Police Maritime Group (PNPMG), served the individual cease-and-desist orders (CDOs) on four restaurants and an auto shop located at HK Sun Plaza along Macapagal Boulevard. The operation was led by DENR Undersecretaries Benny D. Antiporda and Jim O. Sampulna, and LLDA General Manager Jaime Medina, with Pasay City Mayor Imelda G. Calixto-Rubiano, Gen. Alfredo Andres of MMDA, and Police Capt. Randy B. Ludovice of PNP-Maritime Group.

They are the Zhi-Brothers Restaurant, Ocean Bay Restaurant, Da Rae Jung Korean

Restaurant, Song Do Won Restaurant and BHP1 Autoworks.

RA 9275 (Clean Water Act) prohibits discharging or depositing any pollutant to water bodies. It also requires businesses to either put up their own sewage treatment plant (STP) or connect to a wastewater treatment facility authorized by the DENR or LLDA.

A week before the CDOs were issued, the LLDA discovered during inspection that the sewer lines of the five establishments were not connected to the STP of their lessor, HK Sun Plaza.

HK Sun Plaza, which is owned by the Social Security System Investment Property Department, has built its own STP worth P10 million in compliance with the CDO issued by the LLDA in February 2019 for its illegal wastewater discharge.

According to Medina, five of the 48 establishments at HK Sun Plaza were found to be discharging their wastewater to the storm drainage which empties to Libertad Channel and drains into Manila Bay.

Only wastewater that has passed through the STP may be discharged to Libertad Channel.

Meanwhile, Antiporda, DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns, chided the erring establishments for "exceeding what the law has set in terms of the waste they generate."

He said, "We cannot sacrifice our environment for their business. They cannot violate the law and abuse our environment and natural resources for their own gain."

Antiporda also slammed the establishments for trying to jeopardize the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay. "No matter how much effort we [make] in cleaning the Manila Bay, nothing will happen if we allow these errant business owners to do what they are doing," he said.

He reminded business owners of their duty to comply with existing environmental laws and regulations. "We are calling out the attention of business owners, not only around Manila Bay, but all over the country to check on their environmental compliance," he said, adding that the DENR was willing to provide technical assistance or advice to businesses in complying with environmental rules.

MMPC-DENR to start second phase of Plantation Convergence Project

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corporation (MMPC) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sealed the second phase of its ongoing plantation project as both parties recently signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) at DENR's central office in Quezon City.

The second phase covers 30 hectares of forestland in Barangay Kapatalan, Municipality of Siniloan, Laguna. MMPC shall provide Php 1.3 million to initially cover the implementation of the various activities such as site preparation, seedling production and protection of the established plantations.

It can be recalled that MMPC and DENR signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on the establishment of a plantation convergence project last 2017 which covers 100 hectares within a span of four (4) to five (5) years in the areas of Region I-IVA as qualified and endorsed by



(From center left) MMPC President and CEO, Mutsuhiro Oshikiri; DENR Secretary, Roy Cimatu; MMPC Senior Vice President for Corporate Division, Yasuki Maruyama and other key officers of DENR and MMPC during the MOA Signing at the DENR Central Office.

the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO). This paved the way for the first plantation project between both parties in Ilocos Norte last 2018.

Present during the signing ceremony were DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, MMPC President and CEO, Mutsuhiro Oshikiri, PENRO-Laguna, Ronilo Salac, MMPC Senior Vice President for Corporate Division, Yasuki Maruyama, and other key of-

ficials from DENR and MMPC.

In a statement, MMPC President and CEO Mutsuhiro Oshikiri shared, "I commend DENR for their commitment in ensuring the sustenance of the environment in the different regions of the Philippines. For our part, MMPC is committed to stand with you in your advocacy and rest assured that we, too, will be doing our part for the betterment of the environment."



Pinoys encouraged to use bamboo as wood alternative

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu is encouraging Filipinos to consider planting and using bamboo as an alternative to wood in order to help increase the country's forest cover.

Cimatu said that even the government is now shifting to bamboo plantation under its flagship reforestation initiative – the Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP).

“Our effort now is to plant bamboo and probably in five to six years, we can harvest it to make it a wood substitute,” Cimatu said. “Instead of cutting the trees in the forest, we will use bamboo. So this is really a shifting strategy.”

The environment chief made the statement during the recent signing of memorandums of agreement between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. and SteelAsia Foundation Inc. in connection with their participation in the ENGP.

Around 20 percent of the ENGP plantation sites are currently set aside for bamboo, but Cimatu wants to increase this to at least 40 percent.

“We are slowly shifting to bamboo plantations. The reason for that is we have to be aggressive in improving our forest cover. We want to double it so we will accelerate bamboo plantation,” he said.

Cimatu added that “engineered” bamboo can be used as a substitute to traditional hardwood building materials, thus eliminating the need to cut trees in the forest.

– Rhodina Villanueva



World Wildlife Day 2020: 'Sustaining all life on Earth'

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Western Visayas recently observed the celebration of World Wildlife Day (WWD) last March 3. The theme was: "Sustaining All Life on Earth," which aims to promote the importance of varieties of wild fauna and flora, to raise awareness of the threats encountered by the species, and to protect and conserve wildlife resources.

The Philippines is the second largest archipelago with 7,641 islands with a population of over 100 million, and is projected to reach 125 million by 2030. It is also one of the 17 mega-diverse countries with unique characteristics of wildlife species.

There are more than 52,177 described species and half of them are endemic. These distinctive species comprise of amphibians with 114 species and reptiles with 342 species. The country is known as the fourth most important country in bird endemism with 695 species and fifth in the world in terms of total plant species, making the Philippines evidently abundant with wildlife species and resources.

Although the country is rich with biodiversity, it also faces perilous circumstances, making wildlife crime the fourth most lucrative illegal business here after narcotics, human trafficking, and arms. The value of Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) in the country is es-

timated at ₱50 billion including the market value of wildlife and its resources, ecological role and value, damage to habitat incurred during poaching, and loss of potential ecotourism revenues.

The illegal wildlife trade in the country was driven by the following reasons: species are poached to supply national and international black markets for exotic pet trade purposes, meat for luxury food, scales and skins used to make ornaments, pieces for jewelries, and for traditional medicine rumored

to cure HIV/ AIDS that is sold at thousands of pesos.

In Western Visayas, there are five key species, namely: Visayan warty pig (*Sus cebifrons*) considered Critically Endangered (CR), Philippine spotted-deer (*Rusa alfredi*) considered Endangered (EN), Rufous-headed hornbill (*Rhabdotorrhinus waldeni*) considered as CR, Visayan hornbill (*Penelopides panini*) considered EN, and Negros bleeding heart pigeon (*Gallicolumba keayi*) considered CR by the International Union for

Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List.

The DENR enforces environmental laws to combat illegal wildlife trade that has economic, environmental, and social impacts through confiscation and seizures of wildlife animals and plants. Continuous information, education, and communication campaigns help raise awareness in saving these species.

The Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, provides

'Although the country is rich with biodiversity, it also faces perilous circumstances, making wildlife crime the fourth most lucrative illegal business here after narcotics, human trafficking, and arms.

The value of Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) in the country is estimated at ₱50 billion!'

for the safeguarding of Philippine flora and fauna.

"We depend on biodiversity to live and survive here on Earth, thus in our hands lies the power to save and preserve these wildlife species for a balanced and healthy ecology," said regional executive director Francisco E. Milla, Jr.

Enhancing biodiversity conservation is one among the 10 priority programs of the DENR.



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DENR, LGU

accelerate

land titling

This will provide an accurate inventory of the remaining untitled lands which may be subjected to titling

BY ELMER RECUERDO

TACLOBAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the local government units (LGU) are working together to speed up land titling and improve the country's land management and administration.

DENR Assistant Regional Director for Management Services Arturo Salazar said an agreement between the LGU and the DENR will pave way for the implementation of the strategy called Rapid Land Tenure Appraisal (RLTA).

"This will provide an accurate inventory of the remaining untitled lands which may be subjected to titling," Salazar said.

He said the RLTA will include profiling

or assessment, and systematic adjudication including free surveying and free titling.

Salazar added that DENR's Land Management Bureau (LMB) introduced the strategy to support Agenda 6 of the Duterte administration which seeks to ensure security of land tenure to encourage investments, and address bottlenecks in land management and titling processes.

For Eastern Visayas, the RLTA will be implemented in the municipalities of Villaba, Leyte; Malitbog, Southern Leyte; Culaba, Biliran; Basey, Samar; and Lapinig, Northern Samar this year.

To strengthen DENR-LGU partnership and to ensure that activities for RLTA are well-implemented, the DENR will

enter into a Memorandum of Partnership Agreement (MoPA) with the LGU. A MoPA signing was recently held in Lapinig, Northern Samar and Villaba, Leyte.

Earlier a MoPA was also signed between the DENR and municipality of Gamay town in Northern Samar which piloted the RLTA in 2018 and Mapanas, Northern Samar where the RLTA will be implemented next year.

The MoPA stipulates the role and responsibility of both parties which include creation of land management office at the municipalities concerned and assigning staff from the DENR and LGU to conduct land titling activities within their territorial jurisdiction.

"This is bringing government services

closer to the people through the LGU. Avail of the land titling services in your area while the project is being implemented," Salazar said.

He also requested the LGU officials and their constituents to extend full cooperation and assistance to the implementation of RLTA activities to expedite the land titling process. He stressed that land titles are proof of absolute ownership which will improve the social and economic status of the land owners and the municipality.

LGU officials in the said towns have expressed enthusiasm with the new government project and optimistic that this will address land disputes within their jurisdiction. They are hopeful that the RLTA will provide a clearer figure of

the revenue their municipality will yield from the land.

The absence of land titles became a contentious issue during the recovery phase from typhoon "Yolanda." The delay in the implementation in the housing projects were primarily due to absence of land titles since the National Housing Authority refused to buy parcel of land for the housing units if there were no land titles.

Some international nongovernment organizations were also reluctant to implement livelihood recovery programs that requires land use if there no land titles in areas where they were implemented.

Less than 30 percent of privately owned land in Eastern Visayas are covered by land titles.



Planting the seeds of environmental awareness

THERE'S no refuting the fact that trees are the source of life whose value to Mother Earth cannot be denied. In the face of environmental degradation and massive deforestation, instilling the importance of trees and properly caring for the environment among the young is best started early.

It's against this pressing backdrop that Natalia Sali, a social worker with an innate love for the environment, took action.

Together with her family, the "One Child, One Tree" movement was born. Launched under the auspices of the Fostering Education and Environment for Development (FEED) Inc., the Sali Family has been supporting environmental projects in Hagonoy, Bulacan, that educate, encourage and foster awareness on ecological preservation.

Alongside tree-planting for students as its primary activity, the One Child, One Tree movement also organizes and facilitates events related to training and providing expertise in bio-intensive gardening, as well as discussions on environmental protection. Targeting teachers, volunteers and community residents, the results are relevant exchanges on learnings and the latest developments in the field.

Similarly, the family also seeks partnerships between schools, local government units and agencies, NGOs, and private corporations in order to ensure proper support for, and the continued sustainability of their initiatives.

The results have been very remarkable thus far. From 2017 to present, the One Child, One Tree movement's series of mangrove reforestation efforts saw the planting of 5,000 mangrove seedlings along the Tibaguin seashore in Hagonoy, Bulacan, as well



MEMBERS of the Sali Family recently conducted tree-planting activities and mangrove reforestation in Tibaguin, Hagonoy, in Bulacan.

as the planting of over 2,000 fruit-bearing and native trees in different elementary schools and forests in the province. They have also planted 1,000 cropped plants and 150 trees in different elementary schools in the same area.

"The initiative is good because kids become aware early on, as they are oriented on the value of planting trees," said Leonora Robles, a teacher from Sitio Buga Elementary School, a beneficiary of the family's One Child, One Tree Movement.

No doubt, the selfless and impactful work of the Sali Family for the environment could not be more timely or relevant. In light of the world that we live in, initiatives, such as the One Child, One Tree movement are truly deserving of emulation and praise, and the members of the Sali Family recently conducted tree-planting activities and mangrove reforestation in Tibaguin, Hagonoy, in Bulacan.

Jollibee Family Values Awards has brought recognition to their efforts.



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DAVAO: SAN ISIDRO,
DAVAO ORIENTAL
**Davao Oriental
combines greening
and livelihood
program with
falcata project**

THE DAVAO Oriental provincial government recently signed a memorandum of agreement with falcata tree farmers to strengthen its program that combines reforestation with sustainable livelihood. Under the Nagkakaisang Lingkod-Bayan ng Davao Oriental Forest Landscape Restoration for Sustainable Development (NLD-FLRSD), farmers in six villages in Mati City and the towns of Lupon and San Isidro will get falcata seedlings as well as financial and technical assistance. The NLD-FLRSD, initiated in 2018, is "the provincial approach to ensure inclusive and sustainable development of the province's forest resources and of the local communities in harmony with the national greening program and with global forest targets anchored on the united nation's sustainable development goals." Governor Nelson L. Dayanghirang, speaking to the farmers during the March 4 agreement signing, said, "It is not the job of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources alone to preserve nature. Protecting the nature is our shared responsibility." Falcata is a fast-growing tree that is known to have nitrogen-fixing qualities that help improve soil condition. Mature trees can be used as lumber. "The government has supported this program but it is in your hands to make it prosper," Mr. Dayanghirang said.

— Carmelito Q. Francisco



Toyota funds marine protection projects



Toyota Motor Philippines Foundation (TMPF) signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UP MSI) for the construction of an educational exhibit and training center at the UP Puerto Galera Biodiversity and Environmental Research and Outreach Center in Oriental Mindoro.

TMPF committed to provide a total funding of ₱2.9 million for the new training center and creation of modules about the protection and preservation of the Verde Island Passage.

The World Conservation Union identified the Verde Island Passage as the 'Center of the Center of Marine Shorefish Biodiversity' and a source of livelihood for two million locals, in terms of coastal tourism, fisheries, and shipping route to the international ports of Batangas, Manila, and Subic Bay.

TMPF's support to UP MSI is in line with the Global Toyota Environmental Challenge (TEC) 2050 in helping preserve and protect the environment.

Photo shows TMP vice chairman and TMPF president Dr. David Go (2nd from right) and UP president Atty. Danilo Concepcion (rightmost) signing the memorandum to mark the start of the project.



ZAMBOANGA CITY STRENGTHENS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

ZAMBOANGA CITY: The local government signed on Wednesday a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with various stakeholders to protect the environment during the Zamboanga City Environment Summit held at the Marcian Garden Hotel here. The MoU is for the collaboration, sharing of resources and management of the Biodiversity Research and Learning Center at the Great Santa Cruz Island and the adjacent Little Santa Cruz Island Protected Landscape and Seascape between the local government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology. City Administrator Apple Go signed the MoU on behalf of the local government and presented the Zamboanga City Biodiversity Management Framework Guidebook for the sustainable use and equitable delivery of benefits and ecological services arising from biodiversity conservation. The summit was in collaboration with nonprofit Tanggol Kalikasan and the United States Agency for International Development's Partnership for Biodiversity Conservation Program.

AL JACINTO



Duterte visits Boracay today,

aims to spur tourism

By **GHIO ONG**
and **CATHERINE TALAVERA**

President Duterte will push through with his visit to Boracay today, meeting with the Boracay Interagency Task Force (BIATF) to tackle programs to further protect the world-class resort island and spur tourism.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat confirmed yesterday the President's meeting in Boracay amid coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) fears among travelers.

Duterte is expected to discuss with the BIATF, led by the Departments of Tourism (DOT), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the rehabilitation and upkeep of Boracay.

Duterte's visit is the first since the island reopened in October 2018, after a six-month

shutdown to fix its infrastructure and facilities, demolish illegal structures that ruin the environment and undergo a cleanup and rehabilitation.

So far, 394 lodging establishments in Boracay have reopened, offering over 14,000 rooms, according to DOT data released last Feb. 28.

Puyat said the President would also talk to tourism stakeholders representing airlines, hotels, resorts and tour operators and persuade them to offer marked-down rates to attract more domestic tourists.

It is his way of supporting the DOT's effort to entice Filipinos to visit the country's tourist spots amid the growing fear of traveling because of the COVID-19 scare, she said.

He will also visit other famous tourist spots like Bohol and Cebu "to show that it's safe (to travel)," Puyat said.

The DOT has been encouraging local travel by crowdsourcing and posting of videos made by netizens using social media application TikTok on its Facebook page to mitigate the effects of the threat of COVID-19 on the tourism industry.

Since the outbreak, there has been a plunge in tourist arrivals, particularly from China, Hong Kong and Macau, which is expected to result in billions of pesos in losses in tourism revenue.

Last week, Puyat announced it would allot P6 billion "to spur domestic tourism" amid the threat of the virus.

Of the amount, P85 million would be spent for tourism businesses and stakeholders to comply with government protocol in preventing the spread of the coronavirus.

"The DOT's manpower development office will tweak its Filipino Brand of Service

module to include points on how to handle guests for COVID-19 and response," the DOT said. This will include integration of Department of Health (DOH) guidelines in all training.

"The DOT defers to the DOH as lead agency of the Interagency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, for decisions and announcements pertaining to the COVID-19 concerns," it added.

The DOT emphasized that the safety and wellbeing of visitors and locals remain its utmost priority.

"Tourists are directed to visit the DOT's travel advisory bulletin at www.philippines.travel/safeph in order to know the consolidated efforts of the Philippine tourism industry to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus and maintain the safety and wellbeing of visitors," the DOT said.



Virus trips businesses tourism in provinces

Retrenchment looms as hotels, shops catering to tourists feel crunch

By the Inquirer Bureaus
@InqNational



Businesses in the Visayas are feeling the crunch from the decline in tourist arrivals due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) scare.

A business group in Eastern Visayas has warned of possible retrenchment while at least 19 establishments in Metro Cebu have asked the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole) to allow them to cut working hours due to low sales and profits.

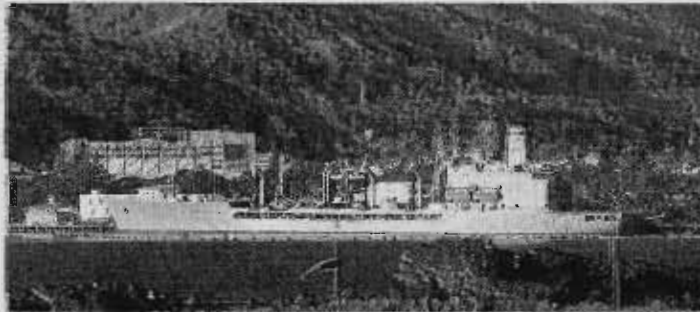
Several business establishments in Leyte, Southern Leyte, Northern Samar, Samar, Biliran and Eastern Samar provinces have reported suffering losses by as much as 20 percent due to the impact of COVID-19.

Flexible work

More events have also been canceled. "Generally all businesses are affected," said Wilson Uy, regional president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and whose family owns several establishments, including hotels and gas stations in Tacloban City.

"[Our] countermeasure is to cut our operating expenses but if this problem will extend to a year, we will be forced to resort to retrenchment," he said.

In Cebu province, 19 establishments—mostly restaurants and furniture shops—have asked



TOURIST SPOT The Subic Bay Freeport, a former American naval base, has become a leading tourist and convention destinations in Central Luzon. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

the Dole in Central Visayas for a "flexible work arrangement" by either reducing the number of working days or hours, after incurring huge losses following the drop of tourist arrivals.

"Those workers who are paid on a daily basis will be the ones who will be affected," said Luchel Taniza, the Dole spokesperson.

In Aklan province, residents and workers on Boracay Island have appealed for economic assistance due to losses of earnings and livelihood after tourist arrivals dropped.

Vendors and those relying on tourists for livelihood said their earnings dropped by 50 percent since the travel restrictions were implemented and as travelers shelved plans to go to Boracay and other destinations.

Workers in Chinese restaurants on the island were also told to go on leave without pay as the establishments closed down after flights from China,

Hong Kong and Macau were suspended as part of efforts to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Of the 1,032,619 foreign tourists who went to Boracay last year, nearly half, or 434,175, were from China.

Subic Freeport slump

In Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales province, businessmen said they also started to feel the pinch of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Danny Piano, president of the Subic Bay Freeport Chamber of Commerce (SBFCC), said hotel and resort operators experienced many cancellations in their bookings.

"Some of our manufacturing members, on the other hand, have problems getting materials from their suppliers. Even the SBFCC has to cancel some of our events this March, including a job fair and a basketball tournament," Piano said.

Wilma Eisma, chair of the

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said hotels in the free port suffered a 43-percent drop in occupancy in the last two months compared to the same period last year.

Festivals canceled

In Pampanga province, Lubao Mayor Esmeralda Pineda had canceled the Sampaguita Festival scheduled in May, citing the health and safety of her constituents. The yearly event is held as a thanksgiving for the Sampaguita growing and garland-making businesses in the town.

Organizers of the Lubao International Hot Air Balloon and Music Festival also canceled its sixth staging on April 3 to April 5.

In Angeles City, Holy Angel University president Luis Maria Calingo placed the campus on lockdown from March 11 to March 14.

In Benguet province, La Trinidad town suspended all tourism-related activities in the face of the COVID-19 threat. The towns of Bokod, Kabayan and Atok, all in Benguet, shut their doors on tourists. Four towns in Kalinga province—Lubuagan, Pasil, Tinglayan and Balbalan—were also declared off-limits to tourists.

In Mountain Province, Bontoc and Sagada towns also suspended all tourism activities.

—REPORTS FROM JOEY GABIETA, NESTOR BURGOS JR., DALE ISRAEL, JOANNA AGLIBOT, TONETTE OREJAS AND KIMBERLIE QUITASOLINO



Govt agencies rush projects for Duterte arrival

BY MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO [@akosistellaBM](#)
Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

BORACAY ISLAND, Aklan—When President Duterte arrives in this crown jewel of Philippines tourism, he will find a vertical garden at the Cagban jetty port, a new tarp showing the aerial view of the island behind a large welcome sign, “Boracay” that was installed last year.

He will also likely admire the paved main road and immaculate sidewalks, and if he stays long enough, a well-lit Bulabog Beach. Most were hastily put and completed for his arrival, according to BUSINESSMIRROR sources.

Residents on the island can only laugh weakly. “I woke up this

morning, with a brand spanking new sidewalk, not to mention the massive ditch across work is now covered,” said Sari (not her real name) in a comment on a Facebook post about the government rushing projects.

Business owner Jim also noticed, “In the last year, it never seemed

like there was anyone working on the Bulabog pumping station it. Today, it’s being painted and the open ditch around it is covered.”

For her part, Gera said, the big tarp with an image of Yapak at the Cagban jetty port is new, while the vertical garden now has “new manila palms, replacing the very dead, but super expensive anahaw which used to be there. There are also flowering plants now.”

She added Bulabog Beach, where water sports are usually held, “was lit up for the first time, two nights ago, while the sidewalk is being rushed to death. The diggings of DPWH [Department of Public Works and Highways] and Tieza [Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority] were suddenly covered with tarps. Whatever is needed to do in a big island-wide cleanup has been rushed. They can do it in three days *pala*, but they neglected it for months!” Jim, added wryly, “In the beginning they were

laying bricks/paving for the sidewalks. About three weeks ago they started cementing the sidewalks, then pressed a mold so they looked like bricks! Now it looks the same after being painted.”

He also “saw several speeding cement mixer trucks. All of a sudden, there are so many active trucks and heavy equipment moving around. Workers day and night, and on weekends.”

Another island resident, Sammy, joked, “Maybe they should announce that the President’s arriving every so often, so the road and drainage project can finally be completed.”

Duterte will visit the island on Thursday, to help the Department of Tourism (DOT) in its campaign to get more locals to travel around the country, instead of going abroad. The local tourism industry was estimated to have lost close to P40 million in tourism revenues from February to March this year, ow-

ing to sluggish arrivals because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak.

Manila has imposed a travel ban on China, the second-largest source of tourists for the Philippines, along with Hong Kong and Macau, due to the COVID-19 crisis. But even for those markets where no travel ban has been imposed, like South Korea, there have been sluggish arrivals as well.

Boracay is one of the major destinations in the country severely hit by the COVID-19 crisis. There were noticeably more Filipinos on the island, and a smattering of Caucasians from Europe. Chinese tourists, who usually came in droves to enjoy the island’s white beach—popular around the world—are absent.

In a recent press briefing, Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat said Boracay hotels and resorts saw occupancy rates dropping by 40 percent. As of February 28,

2020, there are 394 hotels and resorts with 14,289 rooms now accredited with the DOT.

She added, construction of road projects by the DPWH “should be finished by April,” while Tieza’s drainage project “is dependent on the road.”

During his visit here, Duterte will meet with the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), chaired by Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu and cochaired by Interior Secretary Eduardo M. Año, and Romulo Puyat, as well as tourism stakeholders on Thursday. In a news statement, the DOT chief said they will discuss ongoing and future steps to sustain and protect the gains during the island’s rehabilitation.

It will be the first time for Duterte to visit the island since it reopened in October 2018. He had ordered it closed for six months to give way to government’s rehabilitation efforts.



#nationataglance

WESTERN VISAYAS: BORACAY, MALAY

Duterte to meet with Boracay's tourism sector, rehabilitation team

PRESIDENT RODRIGO R. Duterte will meet tourism stakeholders and the task force overseeing the rehabilitation of Boracay when he visits the island on March 12, according to the Department of Tourism (DoT). In a statement on Wednesday, DoT said the President's trip remains part of the tourism caravan to promote domestic travel amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. DoT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said Mr. Duterte will meet with local tourism stakeholders, including representatives from airlines, hotels and resorts, and tour operators after the companies offered discounted rates to stimulate domestic travel. DoT earmarked P6 billion to help the domestic industry nationwide after tourist arrivals slumped by 42% in February amid the COVID-19 outbreak. "At least PHP 85 million will finance the training on COVID-19 orientation, preparedness, response and protocols for industry stakeholders," the statement said. DoT data showed Philippine international tourism revenues in February dropped by 41% to P26.73 billion from P45.6 billion in the same month last year.



BW FILE/ERSANTIAGUDO

REHABILITATION

Mr. Duterte will also discuss with the tourism sector the action plan on sustaining the rehabilitation efforts. Boracay was closed, upon Mr. Duterte's order, for six months in 2020 for an initial phase of redevelopment. DoT said this is the first time Mr. Duterte is visiting the island since its reopening in October 2018. Mr. Duterte in July 2019 approved a medium-term action plan to continue rehabilitating Boracay, which includes the enforcement of laws to regulate visitors, rehabilitation of ecosystems, and the improvement of roads and public health infrastructure. Malacañang also announced earlier that the President will be distributing certificates of land ownership to farmer beneficiaries during his visit. — **Jenina P. Ibañez**



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RCBC hosts roundtable on responsible mine investment

REPRESENTATIVES from major banks recently took part in discussions to operationalize responsible investment on mining projects.

During the roundtable discussion hosted by

the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., participants focused on enhancing current mining-related policies in the Philippines.

The meeting was attended by representatives

from the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (PHEITI), Mines and Geosciences Bureau, as well as financial institutions working in close proximity with the local mining industry.

The event was organized by VBDO (the Dutch Association of Investors for Sustainable Development), in partnership with Bantay Kita, a national coalition advocating for enhanced natural resource governance.

RCBC Chief Risk Officer Jamal Ahmad said environment and social risk management is a cornerstone of the bank's sustainable finance strategy.

"RCBC is delighted to host this event and will continue to play a leading role by bringing the financial sector, civil society and public policy makers to support sustainable finance in the Philippines," Ahmad added.



Stakeholders from both the private and public sectors pose after taking part in the roundtable discussion on responsible mining held at RCBC Plaza in Makati City.



Coke PH, Thai firm build P1B recycling plant

COCA-COLA Beverages Philippines Inc. (CCBPI), the bottling arm of Coca-Cola in the country, and Thailand-headquartered Indorama Ventures have signed a joint-venture agreement to establish the P1-billion state-of-the-art, bottle-to-bottle recycling facility in General Trias, Cavite.

PETValue, expected to be completed in 2021, has a projected capacity to process two billion pieces of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic bottles or 30,000 metric tons (MT) per year with an output of 16,000 MT per year of recycled PET resin which can be used again for other plastic-based products.

CCBPI said PET packaging is 100-percent recyclable and therefore not "single-use."

PETValue will deploy cutting-edge technologies and industry-leading best practices to employ the safest and most advanced recycling process.

Gareth McGeown, CCBPI chief executive officer, said the



(From left, top row), Colm Jordan, IVL Recycling Liaisoning advocate; Juan Lorenzo Tañada, CCBPI Corporate and Regulatory Affairs director Eddie Ingle, IVL chief executive officer for Recycling Business; (From left, bottom row) Maneesh Gupta, Indorama Philippines country head; Saldie Saldariega, Indorama Philippines IVPPC director; McGeown; Jawahar Solai Kuppuswamy, CCBPI vice president for Finance; Manuel Ricardo Sacramento, CCBPI Strategic Planning director; and Terrence Fernando, CCBPI legal director.

facility, will boost the collection rates of clear plastic bottles not just Coca-Cola bottles, but even ones from other companies.

McGeown said the facility will also support Filipino jobs as well as the livelihoods of people within the waste value chain.

Indorama Ventures is a global integrated leader in recycling with over 70 manufacturing sites in over 30 countries and employs over 24,000 people worldwide. It is the largest producer of polyester products and polyester feedstocks and has established its global leadership in PET

plastic manufacturing and recycling.

McGeown said this venture a major step in making the company's World Without Waste vision in the Philippines a reality.

This is a commitment to collect and recycle the equivalent of every bottle and can it sells by 2030.



COVID-19

FIRM APPEALS TO PUBLIC NOT TO WASTE, HOARD WATER

By **Ronnel W. Domingo**
@RonWDomingoINQ

Amid fears of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and continuing rotational service interruptions, Maynilad Water Services Inc. on Wednesday appealed to consumers to limit the use of potable water to address their health and well-being and avoid storing excessive amounts.

In a notice to customers, Maynilad said the need for sufficient supply was more pronounced with the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

"We appeal to all consumers to be responsible in using water," the company said. "Limit its use to activities that are critical to the health and sanitation [needs] of your family."

The West Zone concessionaire of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) reiterated that it was undertaking measures to mitigate the still below-normal allocation of raw water from the Angat Dam in Bulacan.

The National Water Resources Board has maintained MWSS' allocation to 42 cubic meter per second for the third month in a row this March, still below the normal 46 cu. m. This was meant to save up supply for the coming hot, summer months when demand for water rises.

Maynilad's efforts include the optimization of its two water treatment facilities in Putatan, Muntinlupa—which together produce 300 million liters of potable water daily from raw water drawn from Laguna de Bay; reactivation of several deep wells; continued reduction of water losses through sustained pipe replacement and repair activities; cloud-seeding operations; and deployment of modular water treatment plants that will draw water from small rivers in Cavite province.

At the East Zone, Manila Water Co. Inc. said it was installing more line boosters on pipelines across the East Zone concession to help ease service interruptions in elevated areas.

The line boosters will help "increase pressure and help bring water to challenging areas located at higher elevations and those farthest from distribution facilities," Manila Water said.

The stock of water at Angat was pegged at 200.72 meters above sea level (masl) at 6 a.m. of Wednesday, still more than 20 meters above the dam's minimum operating level of 180 masl. **INQ**



Relentless call for support on water projects



OVERSIGHT

DANILO
SUAREZ

DRY season is coming. Amidst the threat of the COVID-19 in the country, another crisis looms. For the past years, Metro Manila has endured months-long water shortages during summer. If we recall, this led to a series of investigations attended by agencies and public utilities in charge of water distribution. This 2020, will we suffer the same fate?

The Kaliwa Dam project has been consistently pushed to the forefront of addressing the Metro Manila water shortage. This project costs P12.2 billion as per the MWSS, funded by foreign loans from the Official Development Assistance, and is seen to be completed by 2023. While this project poses laudable goals, local government units have been advocating better options.

In the past, I have talked about the Sumag River Diversion Project which would supply an additional 188 million liters of water per day. As opposed to the cost of the Kaliwa project, the Sumag project is significantly cost-effective at P774 million. This means that more funds may be allocated to other projects that will ensure the protection of the environment and the welfare of our indigenous peoples who might be affected by the said project. Sadly, this has been suspended for almost four years now.

We have also proposed the tapping of the Agos and Umiray rivers through the rehabilitation of the Agos-Umiray Transbasin Tunnel. This tunnel will

likewise channel additional water supply to the households.

These two projects have better proximity to the Angat Dam. More importantly, these are more comprehensive and holistic as they take into consideration the protection of the environment and support to the welfare of our indigenous peoples, especially in case relocation is inevitable. Instead of pursuing foreign-funded projects, we should take a look at

“Water is indispensable in maintaining cleanliness.”

these local proposals for these are in itself found by the community as more sustainable and will prevent us from incurring further debts. They will consequently preserve our fiscal condition.

We should act immediately on these local proposals. Summer season is fast approaching. Some parts of the Metro have begun experiencing rotational water interruptions at various times of the day. The threat of COVID-19 also increases the demand for water as hygienic practices such as frequent handwashing and drinking of water are strongly encouraged. Not only that, water is almost always indispensable in maintaining cleanliness. Hence, available and accessible water must be ensured, especially in times like these. I, therefore, resound the sentiments of our local governments and seek the support of the national government in choosing to pursue these local proposals.



Water deal issue still in Duterte's check list

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte on Tuesday night said he is still willing to meet with top executives of private water concessionaires but he wants the meetings done in public.

The President, during the 2020 General Assembly of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP), reiterated the meeting will not guarantee that none

of the private firm owners will be charged over the supposed onerous provisions in their concession contracts with the government.

Duterte made the remark as he urged the public not to forget the issue on the disadvantageous water agreements and not to allow those responsible to go unpunished.

"Kaya ito, huwag ninyong bitawan (Do not let go of this) All the violations that you can think of

or all the violations that you would ever know is there," he said.

The President had claimed that the 1997 agreements signed by the government with the Manila Water and Maynilad contained onerous and disadvantageous provisions that resulted in the passing of taxes to consumers, collection of non-existent water treatment facility

See WATER ► Page B5

WATER

fees, and the questionable charging of government for the delays in the implementation of water rate increases.

Duterte said Maynilad and Manila Water executives would have remained mum on the existence of the onerous provisions had he not exposed the details of the contracts.

"Kita mo one after the other, sunod-sunod sila nag-apologize.

Front page, pirmado, Ayala, Pangilinan, lahat. Sa mga milyonaryong ito, mautusan mo kaya mag-sorry sa iyo? (One after the other, they apologized. Front page, signed. Ayala, Pangilinan, everyone. These millionaires, could you have ordered them to say sorry?)," he said referring to Maynilad head Manuel V. Pangilinan and Manila Water chairman Fernando Zobel de Ayala.

"Sabi ko, mag-areglo tayo (I told them, let us settle the issue). Well,

of course, I can, I can talk to you. But it must be in public. But then I cannot assure you that you will not be prosecuted for graft and corruption or plunder. It's worth millions)," he added.

The President, during the event, also questioned the supposed silence of Congress and his critics over the alleged onerous contracts, noting the absence of congressional inquiries and the silence of his detractors.

"Billions sobra. Ayan, nakita

mo tahimik ang mga p***** j**. Wala na. Congress, tahimik. Wala. Walang naghingi ng investigation. Kaya ang pakiusap ko is if I do not reach the finish line for one reason or another, kindly do not forget this (This involves more than billions. Do you see, the son of b***** are silent. None. Congress, silent. No one is asking for an investigation. That's why my appeal is, if I do not reach the finish line for one reason or another, kindly do not forget this)," Duterte said.



MANILA WATER, NANINDIGAN SA PAGESERBISYO SA PUBLIKO SA KABILA NG PAGBABA NG ALOKASYON NG NWRB

IDINEKLARA ng Manila Water ang P5.5 bilyong kabuuang net income nito sa 2019, mas mababa nang 16% kumpara sa kinita nito noong 2018. Inasahan na ito dahil na rin sa mga hamong kinaharap ng kumpanya noong nakaraang taon nang ang kunsesyon nito sa East Zone ay lubos na naapektuhan ng kakulangan sa supply ng tubig noong Marso 2019.

Nang bumaba nang husto ang lebel ng tubig sa La Mesa Dam, bumagsak din ang lebel ng serbisyo sa tubig. Umabot sa pinakamababang lebel na 68.5 metro na lamang ang tubig sa La Mesa noong Abril. Upang maayudahan naman ang mga customer na lubhang naapektuhan sa pagkawala ng tubig, nagpatupad ang Manila Water ng minsanang Bill Waiver Program.

Noong Hulyo rin ng nakaraang taon, ibinaba naman ang alokasyon ng tubig para sa mga kunsesyonaryo ng

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) sa 35 cubic meters per second nang bumaba nang husto ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

Upang mapagkasya ang limitadong supply ng tubig, nagpursige ang Manila Water na paghusayin pa ang sistema nito ng distribusyon, tulad ng pagpapababa ng pressure ng tubig sa 7 pounds per square inch (psi) o aabot lamang sa unang palapag, para patuloy nitong mabigyan ang 7 milyong populasyon sa East Zone ng ligtas, malinis at maasahang supply ng tubig bilang serbisyo sa higit na 1.3 milyong kabahayang sinusuplayan ng higit 5,000 kilometrong network ng mga linya.

Pinagtibay rin ng Manila Water ang pangako nitong makapagbigay ng hanggang 32% na coverage sa serbisyong pang-alkantarilya sa East Zone sa pagtatapos ng 2021. Sa pagtatapos ng 2019, umabot na sa 30% ng East

Zone ang may sewer coverage, katumbas ito ng 2 milyong populasyong naseserbisyuhan ng halos 400 kilometrong sewer network. Malaking pagsulong na ito kumpara sa 3 porsiyentong sewer coverage lamang nang magsimulang magserbisyo ang Manila Water noong 1997.

Sa pagsasaalang-alang sa mga kadahilanang ito, tumaaas ng 32% ang nagastos para sa East Zone nitong 2019 na umabot sa P6.3 bilyon. Malaking bahagi nito ay ang P534 milyong penalty na ipinataw ng MWSS, kasama na rin ang nagastos para mapanumbalik ang maayos na serbisyo ng tubig. Sa pangkalahatan, ang naging net income ng East Zone para sa nakaraang taon ay nasa P5.1 bilyon, bumaba ng 22% mula 2018.

Paglalalahad ni Rene Al-mendras, president at CEO ng Manila Water, bilang pasasalamat sa mga empleyado at kasangga, "Aming lu-



DR. HILDA C. ONG

bos na pinahalagahan ang pagsisikap ng mga empleyado ng kumpanya, gayundin ang suporta ng aming mga kasangga at stakeholders, sa harap ng mabigat na hamong aming naranasan noong nakaraang taon. Ang kanilang tiwala at dedikasyon ay patunay na pangunahin sa aming tinayaang gawain ang mapaglingkuran ang aming mga customer maging sa kabila ng mga matitinding balakid, kung saan ang ilan ay higit pa sa saklaw ng aming kakayanan, na aming kinakaharap."

Base sa Hydrological Information ng Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRR-MC), nasa 200.93 meters ang level ng tubig sa Angat Dam, base sa ulat noong ika-10 ng Marso 8, 2020, 8:00AM), kaya kinakailangang ang pagtitipid upang may magamit sa panahon ng tag-init.

Babala ni Dr. Seville





'Manifestly, grossly disadvantageous' to Pinoys

FORMER Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has called on the government to include what he called "anomalous bidding" on the construction of the Kaliwa Dam in its review of so-called "onerous" contracts between the government and private companies.

Carpio called the Kaliwa Dam project as the "mother of onerous contracts," citing a Commission on Audit observation memorandum on the Kaliwa Dam bidding.

"In summary, it can be deduced that the two bidders/contractors were included merely to comply with the 'at least three bidders' requirement as stated under the Procurement Law. Likewise, the procurement of the project is with the semblance of a competitive bidding when in reality, it is a negotiated contract from the inception of the bidding process," the memo said.

In the Kaliwa Dam bidding, China submitted three Chinese contractors, namely, the Consortium of Guangdong Foreign Construction Company and Yuantian Engineering Company (Consortium), Power Construction Corporation of China and China Energy Engineering Corporation. The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, which conducted the bidding, limited the auction to the three Chinese contractors.

The first bidder, the Consortium, was disqualified because it did not submit the required documents, despite the clear instruction

to bidders that failure to submit the required documents would result in disqualification. One of the two members of the Consortium is a state-owned company of China, while the other, whose ownership is not clear, has undertaken many projects for the Chinese government.

"In short, the COA saw the 'reality' – that the bidding was a sham. The Communist Party of China, which controls the three bidders, already chose from the very start CEEC as the winning bidder and instructed the other two bidders to simply disqualify themselves. The bidding was 'lutong macau,'" Carpio said.

Bayan Muna chairman Neri Colmenares, quoting the COA, cited an alleged intentional non-compliance to the qualification requirements, which resulted to China Energy Engineering Corp. Limited being awarded the bid.

The procurement protocol for the China-funded infrastructure project apparently initiated the false bidding of the Kaliwa Dam project, which is overpriced because of the absence of a fair public bidding.

Carpio called on President Duterte to include in his review the Kaliwa Dam procurement protocol to protect the interest of Filipinos because the transaction as characterized under the Anti-Graft Law was "manifestly and grossly disadvantageous" to the government, and most especially the Filipino people.



GREEN IS IN

■ LGUs enhance climate change action plan

More local government units (LGUs) pledged to enhance their local development plans during the week-long enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) training workshop.

Representatives from the LGUs of the Province of Lanao del Norte, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector participated in the event, which included lectures on climate change, climate and disaster risk assessment process, basic greenhouse gas

inventory, climate change expenditure tagging, and a workshop on project proposal development for the People's Survival Fund (PSF).

"This five-day Communities for Resilience Training Workshop is an essential step to find and adopt solutions that are viable to implement in our localities for we feel the urgency to do this," said Province of Lanao del Norte Governor Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo.

The training is in line with the mandate of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) to further mainstream climate change and

capacitate the LGUs in enhancing their LCCAPs.

In his message, CCC Secretary Emmanuel M. De Guzman shared that LCCAPs, a deliverable of LGUs under the Climate Change Act 2009, have increased from 137 in 2015 to 1,267 in 2019.

"The support of policy and decision makers at the highest level of the national government is critical in our pursuit of climate resilience and sustainable development for our communities. Likewise, key to a climate-resilient Filipino nation is strengthening the cooperation between and among our national government agencies, LGUs, and the science and academic community on mainstreaming climate change adaptation and mitigation in local development and investment planning across the country," said De Guzman, highlighting the attendance of House Committee on Climate Change Secretary Erwin Lara to represent the chairperson, Bohol Representative Edgar Chatto.

De Guzman said that enhanced LCCAPs are expected to further strengthen participatory local risk governance, enhance the resilience of rural livelihood, preserve the integrity of ecosystems, ensure the rich and resilient indigenous peoples' culture, and strengthen early recovery planning.



CCC Secretary Emmanuel M. De Guzman (center), together with House Committee on Climate Change Secretary Erwin Lara (third from right), and local government planners from the Province of Lanao Del Norte during the LCCAP Training Workshop.



Climate threats remain

UNITED NATIONS, US (AFP) – United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned Tuesday that while the global outbreak of coronavirus may have caused a temporary drop in emissions that cause global warming, it would not end the problem and might even divert attention from the fight.

“We should not overestimate the fact that emissions have been reduced for some months. We will not fight climate change with the virus,” he said.

“It is important that all the attention that needs to be given to fight this disease does not distract us from the need to defeat climate change,” he said.

Guterres was speaking after the publication of a UN report on planetary warming last year, and said the situation demanded urgent action.

“Global heating is accelerating,” he said as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a UN institution, presented its update.

The WMO report confirmed findings in December that 2019 was the second hottest year on record, “with the past decade the hottest in human history,” Guterres said.

“We have no time to lose if we are to avert climate catastrophe,” Guterres emphasized. “Let us have no illusions. Climate change is already causing calamity and more is to come.”

The WMO report looked at different aspects of climate change, from the accelerating sea level rise due to melting ice to changes in land and marine ecosystems.



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A POINT OF AWARENESS

PRECIOSA S. SOLIVEN

Human activities build disturbing climate changes

(Part II of "Mapping the World's Climate Change")

The orbiting of planet Earth on its side is causing great changes in solar and lunar energy affecting human life and the biosphere (living creatures on land, water and air). In addition, people do not completely understand how modern technology in food production, transportation, and water system have added to the environmental problems.



demand for water to irrigate crops throughout the world, water supplies are already a cause for concern in many countries. It is not apparent that climate change might make the situation worse.

How transportation aggravates greenhouse gas emissions

International trade, travel and a growing dependence on motor vehicles make transportation one of the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Passenger car and truck travel, shipping, and air traffic are all increasing. Worldwide, the transport sector emitted 36 percent more greenhouse gases in 2000 than in 1990. Total passengers journey worldwide via air travel is predicted to reach 4.72 billion by the end of 2020. Cars and trucks accounted for 70 percent of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions in 2003.

Food security

Climate change threatens food security, although crop yields in temperate regions may improve. Agriculture is highly adaptable. Crop calendars can be adjusted to avoid extreme hot periods, new varieties of plants can tolerate a range of conditions, and good soil management can overcome water stress. With economic incentives, world food production should not be adversely affected by climate change over the next 50 years or so.

Agriculture accounts for about a third of global emissions of CO₂ greenhouse gases, methane and nitrous oxide, but in many developing countries it is the main economic activity of the rural population. It is essential to meet basic needs: food, employment and income.

An increase in temperature makes surface water evaporate more quickly, reducing supply and increasing demand, especially for water to irrigate crops. Warmer and longer summers also cause snow packs and glaciers to melt more quickly. More rapid melting increases river flows in the spring, but may reduce summer flows. Over the long term, a reduction in snow and ice may seriously threaten many river basins.

If water supplies fail completely, contaminated water, lack of hygiene and thirst will take their toll. Many of the effects of climate change can be countered by prioritizing the most urgent uses, adopting water-saving technology and more efficient irrigation methods. However, less developed countries in drier parts of the world, which lack the technology and infrastructure to effectively manage their water resources, will suffer most.

Renewable energy to adapt to change

Increasing the use of renewable energy sources is an important way of reducing greenhouse gas emission, while continuing to provide power. It could be the technological key to economically and socially sustainable societies.

SMALL-SCALE HYDRO. Hydro systems generate electricity from running water. They can provide power for isolated villages, or feed power into the electricity grid. Small-scale hydro does not involve artificial reservoirs, and so avoids the formation and release of methane from decaying biomass. **BIO-MASS.** Plant material - purpose grown or waste can be burned or fermented and

Threats to health

Climate change threatens human health. Where people are already vulnerable to disease as a result of poverty and malnutrition, even small changes in climate may have an effect on health. The poorest regions are likely to be the hardest hit.

Rainfall, temperature, and humidity have a major influence on the distribution of disease pathogens and pests. Warmer temperatures, longer growing seasons, the absence of pest-killing sub-zero temperatures, and increased rainfall all extend the habitat ranges for diseases, as well as for insects, rodents and other organisms that carry them. Climate changes will favor the spread of diseases into previously unaffected areas.

While fewer people may die from cold, warmer weather may lead to increased heat stress. It may also lead to higher levels of air pollutants from forest fires in rural areas, including the formation of volatile organic compounds and ozone in the urban areas. Ozone in the upper atmosphere protects against harmful types of UV radiation. However, at ground level it is a pollutant and can be harmful to health. Thus the number of deaths related to respiratory conditions will rise.

Flooding increases the risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery, as well as mosquito-borne diseases, including malaria and yellow fever. The cumulative effects of environmental stresses, including malnutrition, further reduces the ability to fight off infections.

Threatened water supplies

Water is a vital resource and is often taken for granted. With population increasing in some regions and a rising

used to generate electricity or heat. The CO₂ released is the same amount as was removed from the atmosphere during the plant's lifetime, so biomass is considered carbon neutral. **GEOTHERMAL.** In geologically active areas, the Earth's intense heat can fuel power plants. Elsewhere, its temperature which remains constant at 1.5 meters below the surface, can be used to heat and cool buildings. **SOLAR.** Photovoltaic panels convert the sun's radiation into electricity. Thermal panels convert the sun's radiation into heat. **WIND.** Wind turbines of varying sizes are used to generate electricity for the national grid or for isolated communities. **TIDAL WAVE, OCEAN.** The movement of the sea can be used to generate electricity.

Local commitment to climate/disaster management

Most countries have acknowledged the problem of changing climate by signing the Convention on Climate Change. However, in many places, local and regional authorities are developing more aggressive emission reduction policies than federal governments. Cities around the world are now waiting for the national governments to debate its implementation. They have signed their own commitment, as part of the campaign Cities for Climate Protection.

In the USA, mayors urged the national government to slow the rate of global warming. In February 2005, the mayors of Seattle issued a Climate Protection Agreement, pledging to curb the greenhouse gas emissions at the local level. The agreement was endorsed by the US Congress of Mayors and by May 2006, 230 mayors had signed up.



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Power for the People together with representatives from communities affected by air pollution rally in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Quezon City last Thursday to protest DENR inaction on a report on unhealthy air quality in the country and calling for an end to coal use. BOY SANTOS



Power for the People together with representatives from communities affected by air pollution rally in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Quezon City last Thursday to protest DENR inaction on a report on unhealthy air quality in the country and calling for an end to coal use. BOY SANTOS



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DAPAT makinig sa tamang mga awtoridad ang mga mamamayan ukol sa kung paano labanan ang Corona Virus Disease-19 at hindi sa mga haka-haka at saring paniniwala.

Kung hindi tayo makinig sa mga awtoridad, kapahamakan lang ang dadapo sa atin.

Maaaring lalo tayong magkasakit o mamatay kaya.

44 PATAY SA LAMBANOG

Sa bansang Iran, natuturte ang maraming mamamayan dahil sa bagsik ng COVID-19.

Ramdam ang bagsik ng sakit na ito na pumatay ng nasa pitong matataas na opisyal ng pamahalaan nila.

Kabilang sa mga namatay sina Member of Parliament Fatemeh Rahbar, Ambassador Hossein Sheikholeslam, Ahmad Toyserkani na ex-ambassador sa Vatican City at iba pa.

Ngayon naman, nitong nagdaang araw lamang, uminom ng pinakalambanog ng Iran ang 44 katao para pangontra umano sa COVID-19.

Sa halip na maligtas sila sa nakamamatay na sakit, sila ang natodas.

Anak ng tokwa, may halong methanol pala ang kanilang alak at parang lambanog din sa atin na pumatay ng ilang Pinoy, ilang buwan na ang nakararaan.

Gumawa ang mga ordinaryong mamamayang Iranian ng sarili nilang aksyon at hindi muna komunsulta sa mga awtoridad bago sila lumagok ng lambanog.

DOKTOR SIBAK SA COVID-19

Meron namang isang babaeng doktor sa India na sinibak sa kanyang trabaho dahil sa pagre-report sa mga awtoridad at media kaugnay ng isang pasyente na may sintomas ng COVID-19.

Nag-ulat siya sa mga pulis at sa pinaka-Department of Health nila at sa social media na rin nang ayaw magpatsekap ang isang pasyenteng pinaniwalaan niyang may sakit at galing Qatar at nagnais na bumalik sa Qatar.

Pinayagan naman umano ng mga awtoridad na makalabas ng bansa ang pasyente.

Pero dahil sa kanyang pag-uulat, dito na siya inaway ng mga may-ari at opisyal ng klinika.

Rason ng mga may-ari at opisyal ng klinika, siniraan niya umano



44 TUMUNGGANG LAMBANOG VERSUS COVID-19, PATAY

ang ilang nilang health officials.

"Yun pala, ayaw lang nila na malaman ng publiko na may COVID-19 patient na nagpatingin sa kanilang klinika.

Kung mangyari kasi ito, patay ang negosyo.

"Yun bang magkakaroon na ng takot ang mga tao sa klinika at wala nang magpatingin at magpapagamot doon na tiyak na magbubunga ng kawalan ng kita at pagkalugi.

Ano 'yan, ha?

Paano kung mangyari ito sa mahal kong Pinas?

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Dumaan tayo kahapon sa Bambang, Sta. Cruz, Manila na sentro ng bentahan ng medical supplies at equipment.

Napansin nating sobrang trapik dahil okupado ng mga sasakyan ng mga bumibili ng mga gamot at laban sa COVID-19 ang magkabilang kalsada.

Galing ang mga ambulansya, barangay patrol, service vehicle ng mga Local Government Unit sa iba't ibang lugar mula sa Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon at Metro Manila mismo ang mga nakaparada.

Kahit papaano, larawan ito ng pakikipaglaban ng lahat sa COVID-19.

Ang problema, walang nagtitinda ng face mask at tanging mga karatula lang na "NO FACE MASK NOT AVAILABLE" ang makikita sa mga pintuan o salamin ng mga tindahan doon.

Nagtanong na rin tayo kung may mga alkohol at hand sanitizer, wala na rin.

Nagkakaubusan din ng multi-vitamins at vitamins.

May mga umuwi na lang na luhaan.

Paano gagana ang State of Public Health Emergency sa ganyan na kalagayan na paralisado ang maraming sangay ng pamahalaan?

DEPEKTO

Gaano man kapursige ang mga lokal na pamahalaan na tumugon sa panawagan ng pambansang pamahalaan laban sa nakamamatay na sakit, lumitaw ang malaking kahinaan ng mga ito.

Huli na nang magkarambola ang mga ito na

bumili ng medical supplies para sa pangangailangan ng kanilang mga nasasakupan.

Marahil, dahil na rin sa patakaran sa pagbili ng mga gamit.

Hindi kasi basta kapagpalabas ng salapi ang mga pamahalaang lokal nang walang ordinansa para rito.

Bago makapagpasa ng ordinansa ang mga ito para sa paglalabas ng salaping bayan na pambili ng mga pangangailangan nila, naubos na ng iba, ng mga pribadong tao, ang mga suplay.

REMEDYO?

Kung pahiralin, mga Bro, ang malayang kalakalan sa medical supply laban sa infectious disease tulad ng COVID-19, mawawalan ng suplay mismo ang pambansang pamahalaan, mga lokal na pamahalaan at public hospitals.

Dahil mas mabilis na kumilos at bumili ang mga pribadong tao, ospital at kompanya sa medical supplies.

Kaya naman, mungkahin natin sa mga awtoridad na mahigpit na makipag-ugnayan ang mga ito sa mga gumagawa at nagtitinda ng medical supplies and equipment na maglaan ang mga ito ng sapat na pangangailangan ng pamahalaan.

Kung kinakailangan, gumawa ang pamahalaan ng batas para rito para matiyak na ang mga public responder na LGU, lalo na ang mga public doctor, nurse at iba pang medical professional at public hospital ay magkaroon ng kanilang mga pangangailangan.

Kailangan din matibigyan ang mga pulis at militar dahil sila ang kabilang sa mga unang responder.

Hindi uubra ang panawagan sa publiko na huwag silang makipag-agawan sa mga responder sa problema.

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