

DATE : 20 SEP 2018

DAY : Friday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



**26 ACACIA SPARED**

# DENR SUSPENDS TREE CUTTING ALONG LA UNION HIGHWAY

## AFTER ONLINE BACKLASH



**FACING THE AX** Several trees along the national highway in Agoo town in La Union province have been marked for cutting as these pose danger to motorists. —WILLIE LOMIBAO

**By Yolanda Sotelo**  
@yzsoteloINQ

AGOO, LA UNION—A decades-old acacia tree in front of the plaza here had been cut while 26 others had been marked for cutting as the national government started clearing the national road in this La Union town of obstructions, local environment officials said.

Maximo Soriano, provincial environment and natural resources officer, said his office obtained on March 26 a permit from the regional office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to cut the trees.

An inspection by pathologists from the University of the

Philippines and the DENR's Ecosystem Research and Development Bureau showed that the felled acacia tree was already decaying.

Soriano said the acacia was infected with heart rot, a fungal disease affecting mature trees, and was cut on Sept. 4.

Citing the pathologists' report, Soriano said the bottom portion of the trunk was already hollow and the rotting tree posed risk to residents and motorists.

### Complaint

The tree cutting, however, had angered residents, who took to social media to call on Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to intervene.

Cimatu ordered local environment officials to investigate the residents' complaint, prompting Soriano to suspend the tree cutting.

Soriano said the DENR would review President Duterte's directive to clear roads of all illegal structures and constructions within 60 days before proceeding with the tree cutting.

### More to fall

Agoo Mayor Stefanie Ann Eriguel assured the public that only 26 trees, which were covered by the March 26 permit, would be cut down to ensure the safety of motorists using the road.

But more than 600 trees

along the Manila North Road (formerly MacArthur Highway) in the province had been marked by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), reportedly as part of its inventory, the DENR records showed.

In a Sept. 5 meeting with local officials, the DPWH representatives insisted on removing obstructions along the national highway in the towns of Rosario, Sto. Tomas, Aringay and Bauang.

Soriano said his office had also received requests from the DPWH to cut trees along roads in the towns of Aringay and Caba, and along the road stretches connecting Agoo and Baguio City and Rosario and Pugo. INQ



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PAGE 1  
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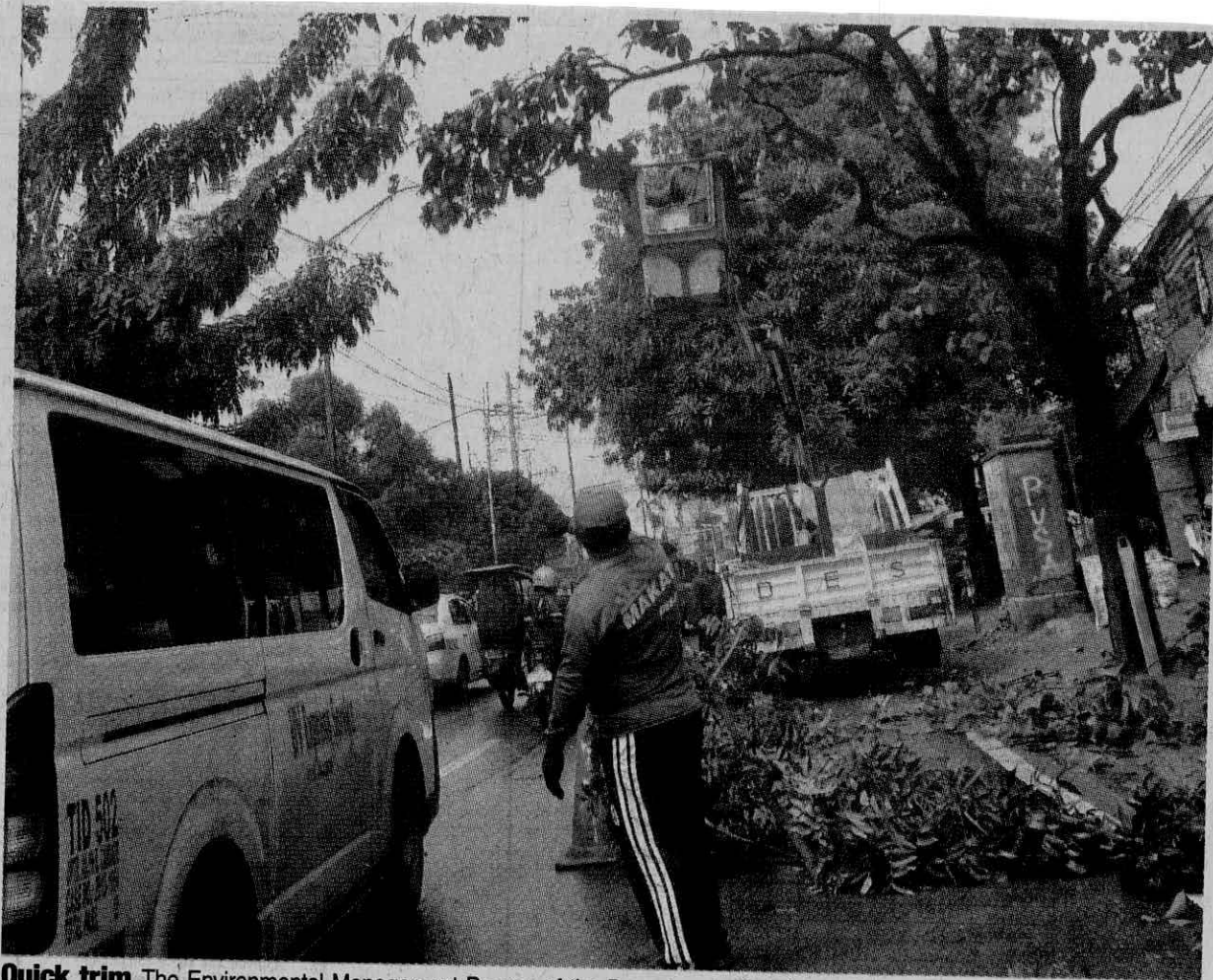
EDITORIAL

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PAGE 1/ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Quick trim** The Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources conducts clearing operations of trees and shrubs in Makati.

AL PADILLA



# DENR sets Manila Bay cleanup Saturday

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is spearheading another massive cleanup of Manila Bay this Saturday, as the country joins the rest of the world in the observance of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Day 2019.

At least 15,000 volunteers are expected to join the simultaneous cleanup activities within the Manila Bay region and in river systems that drain to Manila Bay.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said the local observance of the ICC Day 2019 is a "very timely event" to conduct another cleanup drive in Manila Bay with the same magnitude as the first one held early this year.

Last Jan. 27, about 10,000 people took part in the massive cleanup that marked the launch of the rehabilitation program dubbed as "Battle for Manila Bay."

Since then, cleanup activities have been held in various esteros or riverways and other water

bodies that drain into the bay.

Cimatu said the event on Saturday aims to sustain the momentum of restoring Manila Bay to its former glory, an effort that enjoys the support of all stakeholders from both public and private sectors.

DENR cleanup sites are in Brgy. 649 in Baseco, Manila, coastal areas of Navotas Centennial Park, and river systems of Tullahan-Tinajeros and Marikina River which drain to Manila Bay.

Other cleanup sites include the Navotas Tanza Marine Tree Park; Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area; By the Bay Central Park in SM Mall of Asia and Gloria Maris, CCP Complex in Pasay City; and Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Cimatu said DENR aims to reduce the fecal coliform level in Manila Bay to 100 most probable number per 100 milliliters (MPN/100ml), making it fit for swimming and other contact recreations.



## Marina, DENR tie-up seeks to control impact of ballast water spill from sea-going vessels

BY LORENZ S. MARASIGAN [@lorenzmarasigan](#)

**T**HE government is reinforcing efforts to effectively manage ballast water in the domestic shipping sector to lessen the environmental impact of the industry in the Philippine seas.

Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) Shipyards Regulation Service Director Ramon C. Hernandez said the role of the shipping sector in the transportation industry for an archipelagic country like the Philippines is huge, but the ballast tanks of ships have caused a negative impact on the marine environment.

Ballast tanks are compartments within ships that hold water to improve their stability, structural integrity and navigational safety.

"When water is loaded into the ships, various biological materials such as plants and bacteria are sucked up into their ballast tanks. When the water

has to be unloaded back to the sea, these biological materials are introduced in a new environment and become invasive, which causes damage to aquatic ecosystems," Hernandez explained.

Hence, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) enforced a Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention in 2017. The Philippines ratified it a year after.

Currently, Hernandez said, Marina and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Biodiversity Management Bureau are "finalizing the rules and regulations" of the convention "to control the transfer of invasive aquatic species by ships, as well as to fully and effectively implement the international convention for the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments."

"The country's strategic action plan on the BWM, on the other hand, is undergoing further study and consultation," he added.



**BAN URGED ON RECLAMATION PROJECTS**

# WORLD-FAMOUS SUNSET CAN'T MASK ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES HOUNDING MANILA BAY

**By Nikka G. Valenzuela**  
@NikkaINQ

Manila Bay's picture-perfect sunset cannot hide its environmental problems, according to a science expert.

University of the Philippines professor Benjamin Vallejo Jr., who spoke at a recent forum on saving the bay, said that reclamation projects were the "No. 1 environmental issue" of the historic body of water.

Scientists, environmental advocates and an urban planner attended the forum held earlier this week at the Manila Yacht Club.

"Manila Bay is not dead. There are plenty of fish caught in Bataan [province]. If the reclamation projects push through, what about the fishermen who depend on the sea?" said Vallejo, who has been studying the Manila harbor bay region for over a decade.

Showing images of the bay

sunset from 1910 to 2019, Vallejo said the view has so far been consistent, but the body of water's environmental quality has changed since then.

### Disappearing nurseries

One of the changes is the disappearance of mud flats—land near a body of water that, according to Vallejo, serves as a "nursery for marine species [and] reduces wave damage to the shoreline."

According to him, major habitats, sea grass, mangroves and mud flats will suffer from reclamation projects.

Mike Lu, president of the Wild Bird Club, agreed, saying: "By reclamation, we are obliterating everything, not just the wildlife. When we reclaim, we destroy two places,"

He said that fowls were "environment indicators." The Philippine duck, an endemic species, is found only in the

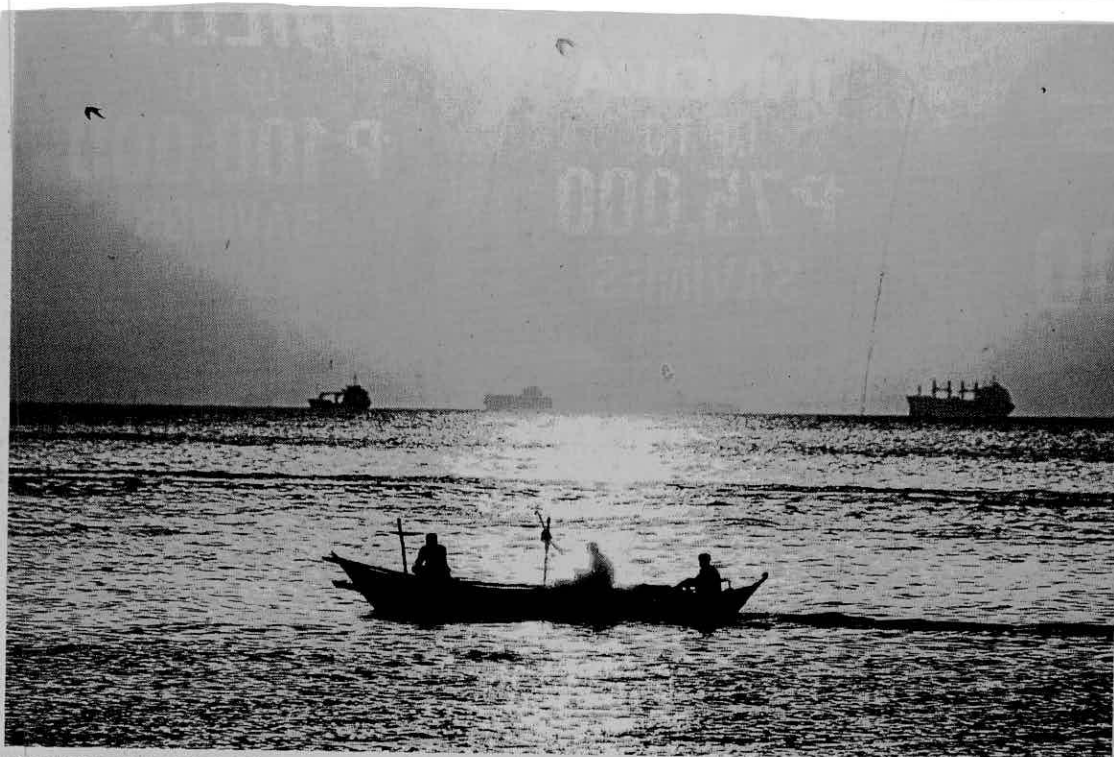
cities of Las Piñas and Parañaque. Balanga City in Bataan province, meanwhile, has the highest concentration of migratory birds.

In implementing a drastic project such as reclamation, Vallejo said that residents and elected officials should weigh the pros and cons. "They should also ask themselves: 'What is the outcome we want to see?'"

House deputy speaker Rosemarie Arenas, on the other hand, cited a study by geologist Kelvin Rodolfo that reclamation would cause land subsidence, storm surges and storm waves brought by typhoons, and seismically-induced liquefaction.

"Reclaimed land is susceptible to liquefaction so structures built on top of liquefied land are likely to collapse," she said.

Arenas urged fellow legislators to pass a law that would ban and criminalize further reclamation on Manila Bay. INQ



**CONSTANT VIEW** The Manila Bay sunset, according to a UP professor, has not changed in decades but the same cannot be said of the bay's environmental quality. —EDWIN BACASMAS



## TONE-TONELADANG MGA BASURA NAKUKUHA SA MANILA BAY TUWING MALAKAS ANG PAG-ULAN

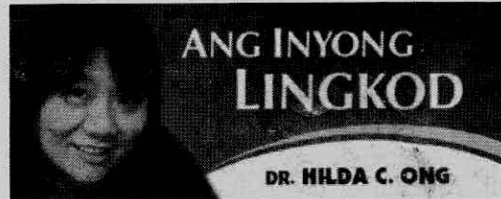
HIGIT 3,810 toneladang basura, water hyacinths at mga burak ang natanggal sa baybayin ng Manila Bay at mga kanal na nakakonekta rito simula nang gawin ang rehabilitasyon dito, ayon sa Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

Makikita sa ulat mula sa ahensya ng Manila Bay rehabilitation, ang mga nakolekta mula Enero 7 hanggang Agosto 31 ay napakarami at hindi nababawasan lalo na sa panahon ng pag-ulan o 2,639 cubic meters / 749.72 toneladang basura mula Manila Baywalk at mga kanal na konektado rito o 2,594.34 cubic meters / 737.12 toneladang basura at water hyacinths na mula sa beach area, lagoon

at aplaya ng Baseco beach sa Tondo o 3,174.5 cubic meters / 901.85 toneladang basura at water hyacinths mula sa Pasig river at ilog ng San Juan o 5,005.5 cubic meters / 1,422.17 toneladang burak mula sa mga estero at kanal.

Inaasahan naman ni MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim na mas maraming basura pa ang makokolekta dahil na rin sa malakas na pag-ulan nitong mga nagdaang araw.

"Dumami ang mga basura sa Manila Bay dahil sa malakas na ulan pero hindi itigil ang rehabilitasyon natin dito. Hinihimok natin na sana mas marami pang volunteers na makiisa sa isinasagawang clean-up tuwing Sabado sa



## ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

Baywalk at Baseco," wika ni Lim. Karamihan sa mga nakolekta ay mga naanod na kawayan at mga kahoy na mula sa mga kalapit na palaisdaan, mga water hyacinths, plastics, basura mula sa mga bahay, at iba pang basura basta na lang itinapon sa mga estero at sapa.

Bukod sa paghahakot ng mga basura, nakapokus din ang mga tauhan ng MMDA sa paglilinis ng mga malalaking drainage gaya ng Estero San Antonio de Abad, Tripa de Gallina, Padre Faura Drainage Main, Remedios Drainage Main para maiwasan ang mga basura at burak na umabot pa ng Manila Bay.

"Marami pang kailangang gawin ang gobyerno sa reha-

bilitasyon ng Manila Bay pero nasa tamang landas naman tayo tungo sa pagpapaganda at pagsasaayos ng kalidad ng tubig," ani Lim.

Ang Manila Bay rehabilitation program ay pinangunahan ng Department of Environment, and National Resources (DENR) at ng MMDA, kasama rin ang iba't ibang ahensya ng gobyerno, lokal na pamahalaan, pribadong grupo, environmentalists at volunteers.

Nasa 18,457 volunteers na ang sumasama sa Manila Bay clean-up na inorganisa ng MMDA para sa walang humapay na paglilinis ng Manila Baywalk at Baseco mula Enero hanggang Agosto ngayong taon.





20 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

## EDITORIAL

### Finally, action on world plastic problem

**T**HE whole world, including our own Philippine government, has finally come to grips with the worldwide problem of plastic pollution – millions of tons of plastic wastes filling our lands and our oceans yearly, there to lie and accumulate for hundreds of years, because most plastics are non-biodegradable.

Bits of plastic have ended in the stomachs of whales and other sea creatures, causing their deaths. Scientists have now found that most plastics break down into small fragments called microplastics, which end up in the flesh of fish that get eaten by humans. There is increasing fear in the world today that such minute plastic bits ending up in the food chain may pose danger to human life.

Before this finding on microplastics, we were more familiar with the more common reports of plastic bags, styrofoam wrappers, and other rubbish blocking waterways, worsening floods and providing breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The United Nations Environment Program has estimated that at the present rate of plastics use and disposal, there will be about billion tons of plastic in landfills and in rivers, lakes, and oceans by the year 2050. The most common of these plastic wastes, it said, are cigarette butts, drinking bottles, bottle caps, food wrappers, grocery bags, lids, straws, and stirrers.

In the Philippines – which has been named with China and Indonesia as one of the top three sources of plastic wastes in the world's oceans – bills have now been filed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives to regulate the use of one-time plastic products. A bill by Sen. Cynthia Villar lists such plastics as soft drinks straws, stirrers, bottles and cups, spoons and forks, and sachets for medicine. Sen. Sonny Angara's bill seeks to regulate these materials by taxing them.

The Philippine plastics industry itself, through the 200-member Philippine Plastics Industry Association, is for voluntary reduction, along with increased production of reusables.

An outright ban on certain plastic products, regulation through taxation, and voluntary reduction of production by plastics companies – these are now possibilities with much of the debate and discussion to take place soon in the halls of Congress.

We welcome this newfound sense of responsibility among our officials and our people. We are a bit behind some other countries, such as Bangladesh which banned all single-use plastics as early as 2002, 17 years ago. But we have finally awakened to the danger of plastic pollution and will now take definite steps to mitigate our inordinate contribution to this worldwide problem.





## EDITORIAL

# Pandaigdigang problema sa plastik

Sa wakas, napagtanto na ng buong mundo, kasama na ang ating bansa, ang malawakang suliranin ng mundo sa plastik, dahil milyong tonelada ng basurang plastik ang pumupuno sa ating kalupaan at karagatan taun-taon. Mananatili at maiipon lang ang mga ito ng ilang daang taon, dahil sa karamihan sa mga plastik ay non-biodegradable.

Ilan sa mga piraso ng plastik ay napupunta sa mga tiyan ng balyena at iba pang mga nilalang sa dagat, na nagiging dahilan ng kanilang pagkamatay. Natuklasan na ng mga siyentipiko na karamihan sa mga plastik ay natutunaw sa mas maliliit na piraso na tinatawag na microplastics, na napupunta naman sa mga laman ng isda na siyang nakakain ng tao. May tumataas na paangamba sa mundo ngayon na ang mga maliliit na pirasong ito na napapasama sa food chain ay isang banta sa buhay ng mga tao.

Bago ang pagkatuklas sa microplastics, mas pamilyar tayo sa mga ulat ng mga plastic bags, styrofoam wrappers, at iba pang mga basurang bumabara sa daanan ng tubig, na nagpapalala sa mga baha at nagiging pangitlugan pa ng mga lamok.

Tinatantya ng United Nations Environment Program na sa kasalukuyang estado ng paggamit at pagtatapon ng plastik, magkakaroon ng bilyong tonelada ng plastik sa mga landfill, ilog, lawa at dagat sa taong 2050. Ang pinakakaraniwang uri ng basurang plastik ay ang upos ng sigarilyo, drinking bottles, takip ng bote, food wrappers, grocery bags, lids, straw, at maging stirrers, ayon sa ulat.

Sa Pilipinas, na pinangalanang kasama ng China at Indonesia bilang Top 3 sources ng mga basurang plastic sa karagatan ng mundo, ay nagpasa na ng mga panukala, kapwa sa Senado at Kongreso upang mapangasiwaan ang paggamit ng mga one-time plastic products. Isang panukalang batas ni Senator. Centhia Villar ang naglilista sa mga plastik, katulad ng softdrinks straws, stirrers, mga bote at cups, kutsara at tinidor, at maging sachets para sa gamot. Nagpasa rin si Senator Sonny Angara ng isang mungkahing bagtas na naglalayong buwisan ang mga paggamit ng mga ganitong materyal.

Ang industriya na mismo ng plastik sa bansa, sa pamamagitan ng 200-miyembro nitong Philippine Plastics Industry Association, ay boluntaryo ng nagbawas, kasabay naman ng pagpapataas ng produksyon ng mga reusables.

Isang kagyat na pagbabawal sa ilang mga produktong plastik, regulasyon sa pamamagitan ng pagbubuwis, at boluntaryong pagbabawas ng produksyon ng mga kumpanya ng plastik, ilan lamang ito sa mga posibilidad na malapit ng pagdebatehan at pag-usapan sa Kongreso.

Malugod naming sinasalubong ang bagong tuklas na responsibilidad ng ating mga opisyal at mga mamamayan. Bahagya tayong nahuhuli kung ikukumpara sa ibang mga bansa tulad ng Bangladesh na ipinatupad na ang pagbabawal sa lahat ng single-use plastics noon pang 2002, o 17 taon na ang nakararaan. Ngunit, nagising na rin ang ating bansa, sa peligro ng polusyon ng plastik at ngayo'y gumagawa na ng hakbang upang pagaanin ang ating walang kinikilingang kontribusyon sa problemang ito ng buong mundo.



# Dead pigs turn up in Laguna Lake

By **NEL B. ANDRADE**

**A**NGONO, RIZAL – The smell rotting led fishermen here to the carcasses of three pigs floating among the water hyacinths in Laguna Lake Wednesday.

Initially thought to be dead dog or cat, a dead pig was first to be found, in the Wawa area of the lake.

Fishermen guarding their boats in the same area came upon a plastic sack that contained two more decaying pigs.

Three dog carcasses were also found in the lake.

Dr. Joel Tuplano, head of the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO), who is also the municipal veterinarian confirmed to Manila Bulletin that the dead animals were indeed pigs.

Tuplano said the dead pigs were buried in a pit near the lake immediately after their retrieval. No samples were taken from the animals since they were already decomposing.

He said the pigs could not have come from any of the local backyard piggeries since the municipal government has been regularly monitoring the health condition of the hogs and conducting meat inspections in the town's slaughterhouse.

Earlier this week, Mayor Jerimae Calderon met with meat dealers in Angono to remind them of the strict measures to prevent the entry of African swine fever (ASF) into the municipality.

Tuplano said the dead pigs and dogs could have been swept in by the strong current coming from the waterways of Marikina, Pasig, Cainta, and Taytay through the Manggahan Floodway, the waterway that leads to Laguna Lake.

Last week, several dead pigs were found in Marikina River in Marikina City and the Agriculture Department has confirmed that the death of the pigs in a poultry farm in Rodriguez, and Antipolo City, were linked to ASF.

The office of Calderon has yet to issue an official statement on the issue as of late Thursday morning.



# Para 'di kumalat ang ASF DA SA PUBLIKO: HUWAG BUMILI NG TIRANG PAGKAIN MULA SA HOTEL AT AIRLINES

**NAGBABALA** ang Department of Agriculture kamakailan sa publiko na huwag bumili ng mga tirang pagkain galing sa mga hotel at airlines para maiwasan ang pagkalat ng African Swine Fever (ASF).

Malamang na dumaan ang ASF virus sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), ayon sa sources ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources

(DENR).

“Napakaganda ang report na ‘yan kasi it validates ‘yung sabi-sabi noong araw. At wala kaming pruweba noon,” pahayag ni Agriculture spokesperson Noel Reyes.

Binalawala naman ni Reyes ang posibilidad na ang ASF ay nanggaling sa domestic sources.

“Walang ASF sa buong Filipinas. Hindi endemic ‘yan sa atin. Ibig sabihin, galing ‘yan

sa countries na may ASF na,” pagdidiin ni Reyes.

Ang ASF outbreak sa piling lugar sa bansa ay may minimal impact lamang sa hog industry ng bansa, pero nananatiling nasa peligro ang Filipinas dahil sa pagpasok dito ng pork meat products, ayon sa mga pribadong sektor.

Mababa sa 1% ng hog industry ang apektado ng ASF sa kasalukuyan ayon sa Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultu-

ra (SINAG).

Napansin ni Reyes na ang China, Europe, Central America, at Kenya sa Africa ang posibleng pinanggalingan ng ASF virus.

May ilang mga negosyante na nakakuha ng mga tirang pagkain kasama ang karne ng baboy at pork products mula sa mga hotel at airlines at ibinebenta nila ito sa mababang presyo na P15 per bag, ani Reyes.

“Sinusunog ‘yan



dapat. Hindi na pinagkakakitaan.”

Ayon sa huling report ng World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), ipinakita na 97% na ang pagkalugi sa Asia dahil sa ASF na narekord sa Filipinas. Ang report ay sumasakop sa dalawang linggo mula Agosto 30 hanggang Setyembre 12.

Ang pagkalugi ay kinakula ng OIE bilang kabuuan ng mga namatay at culled animals mula sa apektadong

sakahan o backyard premises ng nai-report na outbreak.

Ayon sa OIE na ang pagkalugi ay naisiwalat sa pamamagitan ng World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS).

Nanawagan ang Agriculture department para sa mas mahigpit na implementasyon ng Solid Waste Management Act sa pagtugon sa food waste, gayundin sa Animal Welfare Act para sa tamang pag-

tatapon ng mga namatay na baboy.

Ang lalabag sa Solid Waste Management Act ay pagmumultahin ng P300 hanggang P1,000 o kinakailangan na mag-render ng community service mula isa hanggang 15 araw.

Ang lalabag sa Animal Welfare Act, sa kabilang banda, ay mahaharap sa pagkakabilanggo ng anim na buwan hangganga dalawang taon at multa na P1,000 hanggang P5,000.



## P78M fund vs swine fever

**TO manage, control, and contain the threat of African Swine Fever (ASF), a P78-million emergency fund will be spent for biosecurity and quarantine operations, disease monitoring and surveillance, upgrading of laboratories, capacity-building, and other disease control measures.**

Agriculture Secretary William Dar said that President Rodrigo Duterte approved the emergency fund during last week's Cabinet meeting.

Dar also disclosed that a National ASF Task Force was formed and will convene to flesh out inter-agency coordination, in partnership with concerned local government units (LGUs) and the private sector.

The NATF which is chaired by the President and with the DA as vice-

chair and lead agency, is initially composed of secretaries Carlos Dominguez III (DOF), Teodoro Locsin, Jr. (DFA), Eduardo Año (DILG), Francisco Duque (DOH), Roy Cimatu (DENR), Ramon Lopez (DTI), Delfin Lorenzana (DND), Wendel Avisado (DBM), Arthur Tugade (DOTr), and NDRRMC Undersecretary Ricardo Jalad.

After receiving on September 9 the confirmatory test results from the World Organization for Animal Health or Office International des Epizooties (OIE) reference laboratory in Pirbright, England, the DA Crisis Management Team (CMT) on Swine oriented all the DA regional directors in Luzon (regions 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, and CAR) on the ASF, and provid-

ing them guidelines on how to manage, contain, and control the disease.

They were tasked to communicate the same to their respective provincial city and municipal LGUs through their veterinary officers.

Dar also instructed other DA regional directors in Visayas and Mindanao to submit their respective disaster management plan to prevent the possible spread of ASF in their areas.

The DA plans to meet with concerned governors and their respective veterinary officers to align the LGU's local issuances and corresponding actions with national guidelines by the expanded CMT (i.e. DA and the private sector) for a concerted effort with the NATF.

**Cory Martinez**



20-SEP-2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

## **P78M emergency fund vs ASF okayed by PRRD**

**PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has approved the release of P78-million emergency fund, which will be used to effectively manage, control, and contain the threat of African Swine Fever (ASF).**

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary William Dar said the fund will be utilized particularly for biosecurity and quarantine operations, disease monitoring and surveillance, upgrading of laboratories, capacity-building, and other disease control measures.

Dar said the National ASF Task Force (NATF) will also convene to flesh out inter-agency coordination, in partnership with concerned local government units (LGUs) and the private sector.

Chaired by the President and with the DA as vice-

chair and lead agency, the NATF was initially composed of Secretaries Carlos Dominguez III (Department of Finance), Teodoro Locsin Jr. (Department of Foreign Affairs), Eduardo Año (Department of the Interior and Local Government), Francisco Duque (Department of Health), Roy Cimatu (DENR), Ramon Lopez (Department of Trade and Industry), Delfin Lorenzana (Department of National Defense), Wendel Avisado (Department of Budget and Management), Arthur Tugade (Department of Transportation), and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Undersecretary Ricardo Jalad.

Dar directed other DA

regional directors in Visayas and Mindanao to submit their respective disaster management plan to prevent the possible spread of ASF in their areas.

The DA chief plans to meet with concerned governors and their respective veterinary officers to align the local government units (LGUs) local issuances and corresponding actions vis-à-vis national guidelines by the expanded crisis management team, which includes the private sector, for a concerted effort with the NATF.

Dar said the DA during the meeting will present a geographic zoning plan to adjust government response to the developing situation on the ground and effectively prevent further spread of ASF in other parts of the country. PNA



# House probe on swine flu incidence sought

BY WENDELL VIGILIA

A PARTY-LIST congressman has called for an investigation by the House of Representatives into the outbreak of the African swine fever (ASF) in the country, particularly in the provinces of Rizal and Bulacan.

Magsasaka party-list Rep. Argel Cabatbat has filed House Resolution No. 336 directing the House committee on agriculture to look into the status of ASF proliferation in the country "not only to protect the local consumers but also to as-

sess its adverse impact to the hog industry."

"It is the responsibility of the government to take all necessary actions to protect the livelihood of our hog raisers and the hog industry as a whole," the resolution said.

Based on official figures, the country's P260-billion worth hog industry is composed of 12.70 million swine raised nationwide.

Last Monday, the Department of Agriculture (DA) officially declared an outbreak of ASF in Guiguinto, Bulacan and in Rodri-

quez and Antipolo in Rizal.

Cadavers of pigs have also been found floating in the Marikina River, a creek in Bagong Silangan, Quezon City, and in an irrigation canal in Malolos, Bulacan.

Cabatbat pointed out that while the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) has assured the public that the ASF is not considered a serious health threat, humans may still become carriers of the virus which, if left unchecked, can find its way to meat products.

"Humans can become carriers of the virus, and the virus can also

survive even if the meat has been processed or canned," he added.

Malacañang has already approved a P78 million emergency fund for the DA to manage, control, and contain the ASF outbreak.

According to Cabatbat, pigs, warthogs and boars which have been infected with ASF have a 100 percent fatality rate.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has reported ASF outbreaks in Asian countries, notably in China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mongolia, North Korea, Laos, and Myanmar.



# Visayas, Mindanao brace for haze

**Environment execs say tests in select areas show traces of smog from Indonesian forest fires**

Environment officials in the Visayas and Mindanao have asked the public to take precautions, especially when going outdoors, after recent air quality tests showed that traces of haze from forest fires in Indonesia have reached several areas on these islands. Haze could lead to air pollution and increase the risk of respiratory tract infections and cardiac ailments. —STORY BY IN-

QUIRER VISAYAS AND MINDANAO BUREAUS

**By the Inquirer Bureaus**  
@InqNational

Tests done by environment agencies have indicated that traces of haze coming from forest fires in Indonesia have reached several areas in the Visayas and Mindanao.

In Cebu City, an advisory from the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Central Visayas said Metro Cebu was experiencing haze, citing satellite image. Haze is an atmospheric phenomenon when dust, smoke and other dry particles obscure the clarity of the sky.

"We are looking into the ongoing forest fires in Indonesia as the source of the haze affecting Metro Cebu and other parts of the Visayas," said Cindy Pepito-Ochea of the EMB Central Visayas.

The EMB said the amount of particulate matter found in Metro Cebu's air on Wednesday was 56 micrograms per cubic meter, which was beyond the safe guideline value of 50 micrograms per cubic meter.

## Health risks

According to the EMB, this increases the chances of humans and animals absorbing them through their bodies, "and might bypass the nose and throat and penetrate deep into the lungs. Some may even enter the circulatory system."

Haze caused by forest fires could lead to air pollution, increasing risks of respiratory tract



**SOUTHERN HAZE** Traces of haze from the Indonesian forest fires have been detected in several areas in Mindanao and the Visayas. In Cebu, the view of the city's skyline is obscured by smog. —DALE ISRAEL

infections and cardiac ailments.

The EMB asked the public to take safety measures and wear personal protective equipment, such as dust masks or goggles, to protect themselves from pollutants.

"If you have nothing to do outside, stay indoors and always keep your windows and doors closed. Do not jog or run outside as the body ingests more pollutants when active," its advisory added.

The haze was also observed in several cities across the Visayas including Iloilo, Silay, Dumaguete, Bohol and Cebu.

In Bohol, residents along the coastal communities of Tagbilaran facing Maribojoc town have noticed manifestations of haze over the weekend.

In Western Visayas, Ramar Pascua, the EMB regional director, said air quality in the region, including Negros Occidental, remained at safe levels.

## Air quality in Mindanao

In Northern Mindanao, Florencio Dominguez Jr., head of the DENR's Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement in the region, said the agency's air quality monitoring equipment detected the increase of particles in Cagayan de Oro City's ambient air over the weekend.

On Saturday, air quality reading was 34 micrograms per cubic meter, up from 25 micrograms per cubic meter on Friday. On Sunday, the figure increased to 54 micrograms per cubic meter.

Dominguez said the haze

would be pronounced in Western Mindanao because of the prevailing southwest winds that blows through Central Visayas.

In General Santos City, the EMB in Soccsksargen region, had advised the public to brace for possible smog or high-level air pollution in southern Mindanao because of the forest fires raging in Sumatra and Borneo.

"As a word of precaution, those with allergies, asthma and other respiratory illnesses should confine themselves indoors to avoid inhaling pollutants brought by the haze," said Alex Jimenez of the regional EMB.

## Monitoring stations

The EMB had set up monitoring stations last week in the cities of General Santos and Koronadal, and in Tupi, South Cotabato.

Based on its latest advisory, the EMB said the air quality level in these areas were still within the "good to fair condition and does not threaten human health yet."

But it advised children, elderly, pregnant women and those with heart and lung conditions to reduce outdoor activities.

In Davao City, the EMB assured that the air quality in the city remains within the good to fair level although it advised people with respiratory problems to take precautionary measures.

—REPORTS FROM DALE ISRAEL, LEO UTOHAN AND CARLA GOMEZ IN THE VISAYAS; AND BONG SARMIENTO, FROILAN GALLARDO AND JULIANNE SUAREZ IN MINDANAO INQ



## Visayas, Mindanao brace for haze

TESTS done by environmental agencies have indicated that traces of haze coming from forest fires in Indonesia have reached several areas in the Visayas and Mindanao.

In Cebu City, an advisory from the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Central Visayas said Metro Cebu was experiencing haze, citing satellite image. Haze is an atmospheric phenomenon when dust, smoke and other dry particles obscure the clarity of the sky.

"We are looking into the ongoing forest fires in Indonesia as the source of the haze affecting Metro Cebu and other parts of the Visayas," said Cindy Pepito-Ochea of the EMB Central Visayas.

The EMB said the amount of particulate matter found in Metro Cebu's air on Wednesday was 56 micrograms per cubic meter, which was beyond the safe guideline value of 50 micrograms per cubic meter.

### Health risks

According to the EMB, this increases the chances of humans and animals absorbing them through their bodies, "and might

bypass the nose and throat and penetrate deep into the lungs. Some may even enter the circulatory system."

Haze caused by forest fires could lead to air pollution, increasing risks of respiratory tract infections and cardiac ailments.

The EMB asked the public to take safety measures and wear personal protective equipment, such as dust masks or goggles, to protect themselves from pollutants.

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PAGE 1/

DATE



**NONSTOP FIRE** Forest fires continue to blaze in Pekanbaru in Riau province, Indonesia. Toxic haze from Indonesian forest fires closed schools and airports across the country and in neighboring Malaysia. AFP PHOTO



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PAGE 1/

DATE

NGAYON pa lang nadi-diskubre ang bagsik ng vape at e-cigarettes at pinag-aaralan pa ang dahilan, lalo na sa Amerika.

Pero sa India, agad ng ipinagbawal ito.

Bawal na ang pag-gawa, pag-angkat at pagbebenta ng vape.

Kung labag ka rito, makukulong ka ng tatlong taon.

Napurnada ang bakal ng mga tagagawa ng vape at e-cigars na gawing suki nila ang 100 milyong Bombay.

Bawal din ang mga ito sa 39 bansa gaya ng Australia, Norway, Japan, Thailand at Singapore habang may panukalang batas sa Hong Kong na makukulong ang sinomang gagawa, magbenta at iba pa ng vape at e-cigar.

### SA PILIPINAS?

Sa mahal kong Pinas, isinabay na ng Department of Health sa patakarang pinaiiral ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ukol sa paninigarilyo ang patakaran sa vape at e-cigar.

Sa Executive Order 26 ni Pang. Digong, bawal ang paninigarilyo at pananabako sa pampublikong lugar gaya ng eskwela, lugar ng trabaho, pasilidad ng gobyerno, simbahan, terminal ng mga sasakyan, palengke at parke at resort.

Kung may sigarilyuhan man, dapat may sapat na daluyan na hangin at hiwalay sa public places.

SAAdministrative Order 2019-0007 naman ni Health Secretary Francisco Duque, bukod sa nasabing mga pagbabawal at paglalagay ng tamang smoking area, inuutusan na rin ang lahat ng mga gumagawa, nagpapakalat, nag-aangkat, nagluluwas, kasama ang pagbebenta sa online importation, exportation, sale including online at paglilipatlipat ng vape, e-cigar at mga laman nito na kumuha muna ng lisensya sa Food and Drugs Administration.

Bawal na rin ang pagbebenta ng mga tingi na laman ng vape at e-cigar at lahat ibinebenta rito ay magkaroon ng mga warning sign gaya ng sa sigarilyo.



## VAPE, E CIGAR BAWAL SA 40 BANSA; SA PINAS?

Pero kasama na ang vape at cigar ng mga yosi na mahal ang buwis.

### MABILIS PUMATAY

Ang yosi at tabako, deka-dekada ang inaabot ng isang tao bago ito magkaroon ng kanser na maaaring ikamatay nito.

Pero sa vape at e-cigar, anak ng tokwa, bago pa lang ito para pamalit sa pagyoyosi at pananabako ngunit namamatay na ang mga gumagamit nito.

Kaya naman, panay ang imbestigasyon ng mga Kano kung ano tala-ga meron ang mga ito.

Namamatay ang mga kano sa pagkasira ng kanilang baga, at hindi dahil sa kanser, mga Bro, gaya sa sigarilyo.

Ang agad na gustong ipagbawal ni Pang. Donald Trump ay ang flavored na vape at e-cigar.

Ang ginagawa kasi ng mga manufacturer, nilalagyan ang mga ito ng pampabango at lasang gaya ng sa mga bubble gum at mangga.

Mababango at manamis-namis nga naman.

Pero target pala tala-ga ng mga manufacturer ang mga kabataan na mahilig sa may flavor na vape at e-cigar.

May nasa 400 nang nasa ospital na Kano habang 7 na ang patay sa loob lamang ng nakaraang dalawang linggo.

### SHABU AT MARIJUANA

Batay sa nagaganap sa mga Kano na namamatay at nasisiraan ng baga, mabagsik ang vape at e-cigar.

Sa imbestigasyon ng mga Kano, hindi lang pala puro nicotine ang laman ng mga vape at e-cigar.

Hinahalan pala ang mga ito ng marijuana.

Sa Pinas kaya?

Baka naman, may inihahalo ring marijuana.

At ang pinakamasama, baka may naghahalo rin ng shabu.

Mga wais ang mga druglord at tulak sa pagpapalaganap ng droga sa

Pinas.

At kung ginagawa ito, anak ng pitong putakte, ligal na ligal ang paggamit ng marijuana at shabu.

Pwedeng mag-vape at mag-e-cigar ang mga adik sa marijuana at shabu kahit pa kaharap nila ang mga manonokhang na pulis at iba pang pwersa ng pamahalaan na nakikipaggiyera laban sa droga.

### IBANG KATWIRAN

Lalabas pa lang sa katapusan ng taong 2020 ang resulta ng pag-aaral ng European Community ukol sa epekto ng vape at e-cigar.

Pero sa United Kingdom, iba ang sinasabi.

Karanasan na umano na paraan ang vaping at e-cigar smoking ng Englishmen para tumigil sa paninigarilyo.

May 20,000 kada taon umanong Englishman ang tumigil sa paninigarilyo at pananako nang lumipat ang mga ito sa vaping at -cigar smoking.

Hindi umano delikado ang nicotine sa UK dahil maliit lamang ang laman ng mga vape at e-cigar nila bilang pag-sunod nila sa batas.

Sa Amerika umano, kumbaga sa kwentahang 100, wala pa sa 5 ang nicotine na laman ng kanilang vape at e-cigar samantalang may 50 sa Amerika na dangerous o delikado umano.

Pero meron na ring naiuulat na nagkakasakit sa UK at pinag-aaralan pa ang mga ito.

Sa Pinas, dapat talagang istriktuhan ang vaping at e-cigar smoking at tingnan kung pinalulusutan tayo ng mga sangkot sa droga.

oOo

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



# Oil, gas firms urged to join Phi transparency initiative

By **MARY GRACE PADIN**

More oil and gas firms are urged to join the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (PH-EITI) to promote accountability and transparency in the sector.

In its fifth country report covering fiscal year 2017, the PH-EITI called for the Department of Energy (DOE) to issue an administrative order similar to Administrative Order 2017-07 of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) – which mandates mining contractors to submit reports to the PH-EITI.

“While oil and gas sector

has been consistently well represented in the first four PH-EITI reports, we still recommend that the DOE issue an administrative order similar to DAO 2017-07 to further promote accountability and transparency in the sector,” the report read.

For its fifth country report, the PH-EITI gathered data from eight government agencies, 95 local government units, 38 large-scale metallic mining companies, 12 large-scale non-metallic mining firms.

Four oil and gas companies also participated in the report.

The report also covered 63 extractive projects, 88 percent

more than the 34 projects included in its previous publication last year. It also featured a pilot report on small-scale mining, particularly in the province South Cotabato.

Meanwhile, Finance Assistant Secretary Maria Teresa Habitan said in a separate interview that the PH-EITI is also seeking participation from more non-metallic mining companies.

“I think we need to improve more on our coverage. Now we’ve achieved almost 100 percent (participation) in the metallic (mineral sector), we’d like to see more of the non-metallic. It’s also a large area,”

Habitan said on the sidelines of the PH-EITI National Conference 2019.

She is also urging more involvement from small-scale miners.

“The more that we’re able to get information to them on how to do better practices of extractives or doing mining, I think it’s all going down to the benefit of all communities and the people,” Habitan said.

Due to increased coverage in this year’s EITI report, the country’s extractive industry was able to report P39.1 billion in reconciled revenues in 2017, 43 percent higher than the P27.4 billion recorded in 2016.



# SMC bent on pursuing Boracay bridge project

By Miguel R. Camus  
@MiguelrcamusINQ

Conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC) wants to pursue its P5.5-billion Boracay bridge project despite the opposition of the governor of Aklan province.

The 1.2-kilometer bridge project will open the resort island to road access from the main province of Aklan in Visayas.

SMC Ramon S. Ang said the bridge proposal, which was submitted to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), was not meant to increase tourism in the island but to decongest it and address wa-

ter and sewage issues.

"This is the most important component to save Boracay," Ang told reporters in an interview.

Boracay Island, which lures about two million visitors yearly, was closed for six months last year under a rehabilitation program ordered by the President.

Ang said SMC's bridge project would contain pipes to remove sewage and provide fresh water to Boracay while trucks could easily move solid waste off the island.

Ang said the project would allow about 25,000 workers in Boracay to live in Caticlan, further decongesting Boracay. SMC also operates the Caticlan Airport, also known as Boracay Airport.

"There are many advantages to this bridge," Ang said.

Not all stakeholders agree. Last month, Aklan governor Florencio Miraflores expressed his opposition to SMC's unsolicited proposal, local reports showed.

Instead of a bridge, Miraflores preferred an integrated seaport on the main province. The facility will also have provisions for cruise ships, he said.

During the interview, Ang alluded to certain individuals who were blocking the project for "personal reasons."

"I think we should set aside those personal reasons," he said.

The DPWH is currently reviewing the proposal submitted by SMC subsidiary San Miguel

Holdings Corp. The department, on Jan. 29, said SMC was compliant with all the required documents for the bridge project.

SMC still needs to secure an original proponent status from the DPWH before the project can be reviewed by the National Economic and Development Authority.

The bridge project is part of the food and beverage giant's ongoing diversification into infrastructure.

SMC Holdings' other assets include toll roads such as the South Luzon Expressway, Metro Manila Skyway, Naia Expressway, Star Tollway and the Tarlac Pangasinan La Union Expressway. INQ



# Bridge project crucial in saving Boracay, says Ang

By **RICHMOND MERCURIO**

Diversified conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC) is hoping to secure soon government approval for its P5.48 billion plan to construct a bridge connecting Malay, Aklan to Boracay island, saying the bridge infrastructure proposal is "the most important project" for the country's flagship tourist destination.

"The Boracay bridge project is the most important component to save Boracay," SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon Ang said, adding

that "it needs to be pushed to be approved by the government."

Ang said having the proposed 1.2-kilometer limited-access bridge infrastructure between Boracay Island and the main island of Panay would bring numerous advantages to the famous tourist spot as it would address sewage and flooding problems.

"If there is a bridge, 25,000 workers that lives in Boracay can live in Caticlan. That would be 25,000 less people who would generate waste there. That will clean it up, right?" he said.

"But there are some who are trying to block it for personal reason. I think we should set aside those personal reason," Ang said.

The Boracay bridge project is an unsolicited proposal submitted by SMC, through San Miguel Holdings Corp., to the Department of Public Works

and Highways (DPWH).

The DPWH said the proposal is still being evaluated, with the agency currently preparing the project evalu-

ation forms including other ICC required documents for endorsement to the National Economic and Development Authority.



## SMC PUSHES FOR P5.48-B BORACAY BRIDGE

SAN Miguel Corp. (SMC) remains keen on pursuing a multi-billion peso bridge infrastructure connecting Boracay Island and Malay, Aklan despite oppositions against the project.

Its president and chief operating officer, Ramon Ang, said the government should see the benefit of building an access bridge between the Boracay Island and Malay, Aklan, especially on maintaining the famous island's good condition after the six-month rehabilitation works.

"That is the most important project we need to push it for the government's approval," he

told reporters in Tagalog following an event in Clark, Pampanga on Wednesday.

"There are few people who oppose the project for personal reasons, but I think we should set aside those personal reasons," the tycoon also claimed without elaborating.

In August, Aklan Gov. Florencio Miraflores expressed his disapproval of the proposed P5.48-billion bridge. He then revealed the plan to establish an integrated port terminal in Caticlan.

Ang said the Boracay bridge would be the "most important component" to save the

island from untreated waste as the group eyes putting pipes under the bridge as drainage mechanism to release floods and sewage out of Boracay for water treatment.

"If you have a bridge, the 25,000 workers living in Boracay can live in Caticlan. That's 25,000 less people, which will result in lesser water waste in the island," the SMC chief said.

Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar said in June the group might "soon" receive the original proponent status.

**LISBET K. ESMAEL**



## Coastal Cleanup at SM by the Bay

SM BY the BAY and SM Mall of Asia is set to hold the global celebration of the 34th International Coastal Cleanup Day on Sept. 21 to spread awareness in keeping the coastline clean for generations to come.

This is in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region office, International Coastal Cleanup Philippines, Pasay City and the City Environment and Natural Resources Office, Philippine Coast Guard, and SM Cares, the corporate social responsibility arm of SM Prime Holdings, Inc.

To be held at the Central Park of the bay area inside the Mall of Asia Complex in Pasay City, the International Coastal

Cleanup is one of the biggest events of SM by the BAY to support its advocacy in caring for the environment.

This year's coastal cleanup is expected to encourage thousands of volunteers to participate and show their concern for the environment in cleaning the coastal stretch of the SM by the BAY. Through the years, participants have come from different sectors of the society including students, firemen, policemen, teachers, athletes, SM employees and many more.

Paired volunteers will be assigned to different stations wherein one will serve as the collector and other, the tabulator. Data collected will then be forwarded to Ocean Conservancy for final tabulation.



20 SEP 2016

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

## EDITORIAL

### INUTIL AT KORAP SA PRRC

**MAGANDA** ang balak ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na buwagin na ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission at ilipat ang trabaho nito sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Simula naman umano kasi nang itatag ang PRRC noong 1999, wala umanong palatandaan na nagawa ng komisyon ang mga gawain nito na ibalik ang ganda at kalinisan ng ilog, gawin itong pasyalan, panturismo at pang-transportasyon.

Ito'y sa kabila ng taunang pondo nito na mahigit sa P100 milyon taon-taon.

Hindi na nga nagagawa ng komisyon ang trabaho nito, talamak pa umano rito ang korapsyon.

Isa sa malaking korapsyon ang dredging para sa pagpapalalim at pagtanggap ng mga basura sa pusod ng ilog ngunit hinahalukay lang ang mga basura at putik ngunit hindi naman inaalis.

Milyon-milyong piso umano ang kontrata rito na wala namang makitang resulta.

Nananatili ang mga basura at putik na nagpapabaw at nagpapabaho sa ilog at walang nagawa ang PRRC para ayusin ang mga pagtatapon ng mga dumi, kasama ang mga dumi ng tao na bumubulwak sa ilog.

Kaya naman, dahil sa rumi at baho ng ilog, walang mangahas na turista na gawing pasyalan ito at gumawa ng tuloy-tuloy na sistemang pang-transportasyon.

Kaugnay nito, dapat magpaliwanag din ang PRRC at mga local government unit sa pagkakaroon ng PRRC ng bahagi sa mga parking fee sa ilang lungsod ng Kamaynilaan na tinatayang milyon-milyong piso taon-taon.

Karaniwang pinangangasiwaan ng mga misis ng mga punong-lungsod o mga misis na konektado sa Malakanyang ang koleksyon para sa PRRC.

Puno talaga ng korapsyon at kainutilan ang PRRC at dapat na buwagin na lang ito.





# Climate strike: The Filipino youth rises

WHEN schoolchildren from around the world – from the edge of the Arctic Circle to the South Pacific – made their voices heard on a historic Friday last March 15 in one of the largest global efforts to demand more action on climate change, it seemed nothing much was heard from students of the Philippines.

But this September 20 promises to be different. And it could be historic, too.

Students from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Universidad de Manila, and other public schools, as well as members of the Sangguniang Kabataan, shall form the Philippine participation to the worldwide demonstrations inspired by 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

Cecile Guidote Alvarez, UNESCO Artist for Peace and Magsaysay Laureate, said the kickoff event of the Global Strike for Climate Justice, International Peace Day and World Clean-up will be held at the Earthsavers Gallery of the Sea Baywalk ground of Manila Yacht Club, Roxas Blvd., starting at 7am.

Convened by former Sen. Heheron Alvarez, founder of Earthsavers and chair of the Climate Institute Advisory Board, the event “will model the mobilization of youth leadership of the City of Manila headed by Mayor Isko Moreno,” and is intended to “fulfill the Paris Accord through Clean-up and re-greening and initiatives to promote a culture of peace.” Former Sen. Joey Lina of Sagot Kita Bayan is co-convenor.

Environmental and peace songs will be rendered by the Blind Singers of Earthsavers at the event. Alvarez

## INSIGHTS.xlr8

Angelo Tugado



said “paintings of caffeneited pallette and the Marawi paintings against armed conflict by Nemi Miranda will be bannered by the youth participants.”

The environmental activism of Thunberg, who was nominated for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize, has ignited a movement that has gained momentum worldwide as hundreds of thousands of students skip classes to gather on the streets during Fridays to protest against government inaction and inadequate policies of world leaders in tackling adverse effects of climate change.

“The oceans are rising, so are we,” read a placard in a Sydney protest action.

“Why should we go and study for a future that may not exist anymore?” Thunberg said in a TV interview, as she expressed delight over the global response of the youth to her advocacy. “More people are starting to become aware of the situation and that we are facing a crisis... It’s amazing to see that hundreds of thousands of children from all around the world are realizing this and are making their voices heard.”

\*\*\*  
**TAIWAN WELCOMES**

## TRIUMPH OF JUSTICE

The ruling of Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Eduardo Ramon Reyes which found the Philippine Coast Guard personnel guilty for the 2013 homicide of Taiwanese fisherman Hung Shih-cheng has thwarted what could have been renewed tension and bitterness in Taiwan against the Philippines.

The shooting of the captain of the Taiwanese vessel Guang Da Xing No. 28 on May 9, 2013 at Balintang Channel, in an area where exclusive economic zones of Taiwan and the Philippines overlap, sparked a diplomatic impasse between the two countries. So much bitterness pervaded Taiwan then when its president at that time described what occurred as “cold-blooded murder.”

When the court ruling came out on Wednesday, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in the Philippines said: “Today, the long-awaited justice in this shooting incident was served but it was a hard and a bitter experience for both countries... The Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) welcomes the verdict, and expresses its gratitude and respect to the Philippine judicial system.”

TECO added: “May the verdict in this case serve, not only as a symbol of justice, but also a testament to the solid relationship and deep mutual trust between Taiwan and the Philippines... We now have to move on from this tragic incident and determine how to further enhance the bilateral relationships between our two countries.”

It is indeed time to move on and further strengthen friendly ties.

Email: insights.xlr8@yahoo.com



# Climate change takes center stage at UN

By JANVIC MATEO

UNITED NATIONS – Solutions to address the worsening challenges posed by climate change will be at the center of high-level events coinciding with the 74th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) here in New York.

Five major summits, including the 2019 Climate Action Summit convened by UN Secretary General António Guterres, will be held next week in time for the general debates of the 74th UNGA, which is expected to be attended by heads of state and other top officials of UN member-states.

“There will be dozens of summits, meetings and side events. But I can distill the significance of all these discussions into two words: ambition and action,” Guterres said at a press briefing on Thursday (Manila time).

“Our focus for our meetings next week will be sustainable and inclusive development, leaving no one behind. We will spotlight climate change, which threatens everyone and everything,” he added.

The Climate Action Summit, the first of its kind organized since the signing of the landmark climate agreement in Paris in 2016, aims to gather leaders from governments,

private sector and civil society around the world to galvanize actions that would limit climate change and impact.

“I told leaders not to come with fancy speeches, but with concrete commitments,” said Guterres. “I expect there will be an announcement and unveiling of a number of meaningful plans on dramatically reducing emissions during the next decade, and on reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.”

The summit, which will happen on Sept. 23 ahead of the general debates, is expected to feature bold actions and multi-stakeholder initiatives that will address high-impact areas such as transition to

renewable energy, adaptation and nature-based solutions.

“We will showcase initiatives seeking to move away from coal, putting a price on carbon, stopping subsidies for fossil fuels and cutting the pollution that damages our health,” the UN official said.

“And we will highlight the importance of scaling up nature-based solutions, creating cleaner ways in the way we work and societies function, building resilience, protecting people, mobilizing finance and promoting decent jobs for a just transition,” he added.

Guterres said he expects strong commitments from leaders to support developing

countries in adaptation and mitigation.

“I’m convinced that we will come out of the summit with an enhanced momentum, not with all problems solved but with an enhanced momentum, and the same in relation to this reducing or eliminating subsidies to fossil fuels,” he said.

UN special envoy for the climate change summit Luis Alfonso de Alba, in a separate interview with reporters on Wednesday, stressed that the current country commitments would not be enough to minimize global warming to the ideal 1.5 degree Celsius by 2030.

“We need to recognize that this is a long process. What I’m hoping is that by holding this summit, by asking governments to come with the plans, by raising the visibility and the political will globally, we may be in a much better position by the time we present the new NDCs (nationally determined contributions) next year,” he said.

“We need to double or triple our efforts, we need to commit to do that within 12 months. It’s not going to be easy, but I think we have a good beginning,” he added.

A delegation from the Philippines will attend the summit, Climate Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman told **The STAR**.

– With Robertzon Ramirez



# New UN report bares faster earth warming

**I**N 2016, the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in Paris called on the nations of the world to undertake individual programs to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere that are causing world temperatures to rise. It was agreed then that global warming should be held down below 2 degrees Celsius – 1.5 degrees, if possible – above pre-industrial levels.

The UN has now released a new report saying that the current use of fossil fuels appears to be warming the earth's surface more rapidly than previously believed. Citing studies by two leading research centers in France cooperating with the UN, the report said the new projections show that at the present rate at which the earth's surface temperature is rising because of carbon emissions, the average earth temperature by 2100 could be higher by 6.5 to 7 degrees.

Last May, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said, "We're still losing the battle. Climate change is still running faster than we are, and if we don't reverse this trend, it will be a tragedy for the whole world." This latest report supports his fears.

UN scientists have pointed out that with barely one degree of warming so far, the world is already

copied with increasingly deadly heat waves, droughts, floods, tropical cyclones, and hurricanes. The Bahamas and the eastern states of the United States have just been hit by hurricane Dorian and are now bracing for hurricane Humberto.

Hundreds of fires are devastating the great Amazon forest in South America. Icebergs are fast melting in the northern polar regions, particularly in Iceland and Greenland. The melting glaciers, in turn, are raising ocean levels, threatening to inundate low-lying islands around the world. Indonesia has announced it is moving its capital Jakarta to another island, because the present site is fast sinking while surrounding waters are fast rising.

The biggest producer of carbon emissions today is the United States, the world's top industrial country. Unfortunately, it is also the lone country which rejected the Paris agreement and its goals, probably because it wants to protect its coal industry.

It is hoped that the latest UN report – that world temperatures are rising faster than earlier feared – will encourage the US to restudy its position and join the rest of the world and pledge to curb its carbon emissions.

The Philippines has its own pledge which it submitted to the Paris conference in 2016. We trust that our government is keeping true to this pledge.



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

P-1

# UN chief: Address climate change fast

World leaders attending the upcoming United Nations (UN) Climate Action Summit are being urged to show up armed not with speeches but with plans to achieve carbon neutrality, reduce emissions and improve adaptation.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued the charge during a visit to The Bahamas, which continues to reel from the onslaught of Hurricane "Dorian." UN agencies are on the ground to support relief efforts in the affected islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama.

Speaking to journalists in the capital, Nassau, the UN chief expressed international solidarity with the government and people of the island nation.

## The Bahamas cannot be expected to foot this bill alone.

"In some areas, more than three-quarters of all buildings have been destroyed, hospitals in ruins or overwhelmed, schools turned into rubble. Thousands of people will continue to need help with food, water and shelter, and many more facing the uncertainties of the future after having lost everything," he said.

Guterres noted that the climate crisis has generated "turbocharged" hurricanes and storms, which are occurring with greater intensity and frequency. And without urgent action, climate disruption will only get worse, packing what he described as "a triple punch of injustice."

"First, the worst impact is on countries with the lowest greenhouse emissions; The Bahamas are a very good example of that. Second, it is the poorest and most vulnerable people in those countries who suffer most, and again, the same has happened with

the communities in The Bahamas. And third, repeated storms trap countries in a cycle of disaster and debt."

While the financial cost of Hurricane "Dorian" has not yet been determined, Guterres estimated it will be in the billions of dollars.

"The Bahamas cannot be expected to foot this bill alone. These new large-scale climate-related disasters require a multilateral response. Climate financing is one element," he said. "We must reach the target of \$100 billion per year from public and private sources, for mitigation and adaptation in the developing world, as rich countries have been promising for nearly a decade. And we must improve access to development financing. In cases like the Bahamas, I strongly support proposals to convert debt into investment in resilience."

Above all, Guterres called for greater global action.

"The entire international community must address the climate crisis through rising ambition and action to implement the Paris

Agreement. The best available science, as reported by the

Inter-governmental Panel on

Climate Change, says we

must ensure collectively

that global temperature

rise does not go beyond

1.5 degrees. And it says we

have a window of less than

11 years to avoid irreversible

climate disruption and that we

must reduce emissions by 45

percent by 2030 and achieve

carbon neutrality by 2050,"

he continued.



VIEW of the mass destruction by Hurricane "Dorian" in Marsh Harbor, Abaco Island in the Bahamas.



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

P-2

NO - chief: Address climate change fast

Strengthening cultural heritage and culture-related food practices boosts social inclusion, economic development and well-being, the United Nations (UN) deputy culture chief told participants at the UNESCO agency's World Forum on the matter.

"Cultural policies today provide innovative responses in areas such as inclusion, technical

and vocational education, employment, the preservation of cultural heritage and biodiversity," Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO, Ernesto Otonne, said.

Speaking to some 200 international participants gathered in Italy's Parma for the gathering, entitled, "Culture and Food: Innovative Strategies for Sustainable Development," Otonne stressed that cultural practices rooted in traditional and local knowledge systems related to food, are important markers of environmental sustainability.

He stressed that food, in addition to nourishing us, forms



A FARMER transplants rice in a paddy field in the Philippines. UN PHOTO

communities' socioeconomic identities, in the way it's cultivated, processed and prepared — as summed up in the event's promotional video: "Tell me what you eat, I will tell you who you are."

The forum, organized by UNESCO in collaboration with Italian authorities, hosted five panels focusing on food in relation to cultural identity, socio-economic development, education

and sustainability, biodiversity and food security and also highlighted UNESCO's Creative Cities of Gastronomy — a network of cities promoting cultural industries at the heart of development.

One of the ways some 26 "Creative Cities," Parma included, are striving to be more sustainable, is through cuisine. Each has adopted innovative, locally-adapted strategies and projects, such as cultivating indigenous crops, supporting urban farming, organizing food festivals and training programs to showcase the linkages between culture, community and environment.



## Fire and hail push insurers to rethink climate change risks

LONDON. — By the time David Kaisel got back from selling his flour at a farmers' market, a wildfire in California's Capay Valley had burnt both his tractor and the shipping container where he kept some tools. His insurer is set to pay out a sixth of his losses.

He is now considering widening his coverage in the future to include fire insurance for his business.

Kaisel is the kind of customer making insurers rethink their approach to climate change so they can sell policies without incurring too much risk.

"I'm already accustomed to drought, but in the past year I learned first-hand the consequences of both record rainfall and wildfire," Kaisel said. "I'll certainly consider insuring against environmental risks when my cash flow permits."

How much that should cost him is something insurers are getting to grips with after years in which their main natural catastrophe focus was hurricanes and earthquakes -- and global warming was mainly a concern for the future rather than the present.

Other natural disasters such as wildfires, flash floods and hail have

become increasingly costly for the industry, even though they were traditionally seen as lesser risks and classed by some insurers as "secondary perils."

From 2010 to 2018, average insured losses from secondary perils were almost double those from primary perils such as earthquakes and hurricanes, a Reuters analysis of Swiss Re data showed.

While scientists are wary of attributing particular disasters to climate change, most agree it is making extreme weather more frequent or intense. Insurers, along with Kaisel and other farmers around the world, are at the sharp end.

"A lot of the secondary perils are very localized, very short-term," said Thierry Corti, who heads climate change strategy for Swiss Re, which insures insurers. "So we really need to understand them on a case-by-case basis and it's often very hard to generalize."

In interviews, more than a dozen companies -- including insurers, insurance associations, brokers and risk management firms -- said these smaller disasters could be very costly.

Some did not share specifics

about how they were dealing with them but many did: several described details that had not been publicized before.

### HAZARD MAPS

In response to needs of insurers and other customers, U.S. tech company ClimaCell said it began offering a wildfire prediction product this year, which analyses temperature, humidity and wind in real time.

Allianz Re, the reinsurance arm of the German Allianz Group, started work on adding wildfires to an interactive hazard map at the end of last year after major wildfires in Portugal and California, Markus Stowasser, head of catastrophe research and development, said.

The new version of the map, which already includes floods, tornadoes, hail, earthquakes, tropical and extra-tropical storms, is due to be launched this year. It will let Allianz underwriters assess the risk of wildfire anywhere in the world, based on previous wildfires, climate conditions and vegetation.

Wildfires became a bigger focus for insurance companies after the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire

in Canada, said Dave Fox, chief executive of Geospatial Insight, a company that helps insurance companies assess damage from a catastrophe by collecting images and data. The Fort McMurray fire forced the evacuation of around 90,000 residents in northern Alberta and cut Canadian oil output by roughly 1 million barrels a day.

This year, Hiscox, an underwriter at Lloyd's of London, paid to license a risk model for wildfires in the United States and applied its own research, after suffering losses from California wildfires in 2018.

It will help Hiscox set premiums more accurately, said Shree Khare, head of catastrophe research, adding that it might have stopped insuring some clients in high-risk areas otherwise.

"Prior to this year we didn't really have a good modeling solution for US wildfire," he said, adding that the industry wasn't paying much attention to wildfires before. "I think it's just the nature of insurance. We tend to worry about things after they happen."

While wildfires could become

See FIRE ► Page B5

a bigger issue in Europe, he was not completely convinced and said losses would have to be larger before Hiscox would do similar modeling work there.

The California Department of Insurance regulator said in August coverage was getting harder to find for communities prone to wildfire, with a 10% increase in insurers refusing to renew policies last year in areas that were affected by fires in 2015 and 2017.

In May, the department said wildfire insurance losses from what it described as "the most destructive wildfire month in California's history" in November 2018 topped \$12 billion.

Kaisel, who lost more than \$15,000 in the Capay Valley fires, expects to get \$2,500 from his insurer and managed to raise the rest via an online fundraiser.

He would like to insure future risks once his five-year-old business growing specialized grains and milling them into flour starts making a profit -- but the unpredictable impact of global warming means he is not sure exactly what the risks will be.

"For folks like me it's not some far off possibility, it's here and now," he said of climate change. "It's happening."

Swiss Re's research arm has published data going back to 1970 it said showed natural catastrophe losses from primary perils were being overtaken by those traditionally considered secondary. In August, it said the latter accounted for \$13 billion of \$15 billion in natural catastrophe insured losses in the first half of this year.

It included standalone events -- similar to the wildfire that forced the evacuation of 10,000 people in the Canary Islands last month and the tennis-ball-sized hail that caused damage in Munich in June. It also defined secondary perils as spinoffs from well-monitored primary perils, for example extra-heavy rainfall in Texas during Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

The data show total insured losses from natural catastrophes are up from less than \$7 billion a year in the 1970s to between \$29.3 billion and \$143.4 billion a year from 2010 to 2018. In 2018, 62% of all natural catastrophe insurance claims came from secondary perils.

Swiss Re's German rival Munich Re, said perils tended to evolve over time, citing flash-flooding as one that had moved up insurers' agenda, but agreed a change of emphasis was needed. — Reuters