

DATE : 09-23-19

DAY : Monday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

**Strategic Communication and Initiative Service**



## Cimatu sasampolan ang Boracay Tubi ni Lucio Tan

"I have made it clear from Day 1 that no one is above the law."

Ito ang ipinahayag ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu matapos maglabas ng interim cease and desist order (COD) ang kanyang tanggapan laban sa Boracay Tubi Systems Inc. (BTSI).

Kasunod ito ng kumalat na video ng isang Koreanong diver kung saan nakuhanan ang sewage pipe ng nasabing water concessionaire na pag-aari ng bilyonaryong Lucio Tan na nagbubuga ng dumli sa ilalim ng karagatan sa Boracay.

Sabi ni Cimatu, kailangan ang mahigpit na pagpapatupad sa environmental laws para mapangalagaan ang ating kalikasan at mga likas na yaman.

"We will appropriately deal with the people responsible for this violation," ayon kay Cimatu, chairman ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force.

Natunton umano DENR ang wastewater discharge mula sa may isang kilometrong outfall pipe ng BTSI mula sa Lugutan area sa Brgy. Manoc-Manoc patungo sa Sibuyan Sea.

Nilagyan umano ng mga sinker sa outfall pipe para hindi ito lumutang.



# President turns his attention to Pasig River

**P**RESIDENT Duterte, voicing exasperation over the impossibly polluted condition of the Pasig River, announced last Tuesday that he was removing the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission and transferring all its functions and responsibilities to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The river can no longer be cleaned up because there is no zoning, he said. Over the years, the wastes of so many factories and households have been thrown into the river which flows into Manila Bay where its wastes join those of 17 other rivers that end up in the bay.

And yet the Pasig River is such a historic and beautiful part of Manila and the many towns upstream. It is so valued a spot in our history, in fact, that it was made the site of Malacañang, the home of Philippine presidents.

The deterioration of the river goes back many decades. It is said fish began to disappear from the river in the 1930s and by the 1970s, it had begun to give off a smell. All swimming and travelling by boat had stopped by the 1980s. It was declared biologically dead in the 1990s.

The principal reason was that after World War II, shanty towns of people coming from the provinces sprang up all along the river. They and the factories and piggeries and markets that arose all along the river and its many tributaries simply disposed of their wastes into the river. That practice, it may be noted, continues to this day; only recently, so many dead pigs, victims of African swine fever, were found floating on the Marikina River, on its way to the Pasig.

During the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos in the 1990s, some 700,000 people were

relocated from squatter areas to various towns in Bulacan, Laguna, Rizal, Cavite, and Batangas, but most of them returned to other shanty towns along the Pasig to be close to their places of work in Metro Manila.

This is the Pasig River and Manila Bay which President Duterte now wants to clean up, after the government's success in the six-month rehabilitation of Boracay island. But the problem in Metro Manila is a hundred times bigger, that Secretary Roy Cimatu of the DENR said it will take more than ten years to stop all the garbage and the pollution pouring into the bay from the Pasig and the many other rivers in Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Metro Manila, Laguna, and Cavite.

President Joseph Estrada, who succeeded President Ramos in 1998, created the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission in 1998 with the singular job of cleaning up the Pasig. It has evidently failed in this task after all these years. The Pasig is as dirty as ever. There was a plan led by then Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno to set up a ferry service with so many stops along the Pasig, but nothing has come of it, probably because, with the pollution and the smell of the river, many commuters would rather take the buses, jeepneys, and light rails in Metro Manila's traffic-jammed streets.

But President Duterte appears determined to do something about the Pasig problem, especially since he lives right along its banks in Malacañang. He said last Tuesday, "Me, I am just near the Pasig River. Sometimes I take a bath there if I want bacteria in my body to help me become immune."

He was joking of course, but we hope, as in the case of so many other previous jokes, he means to really do something about the dirty, smelly, polluted Pasig River.



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF SINCE 1900 PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

6  
PAGE

UPPER  
LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

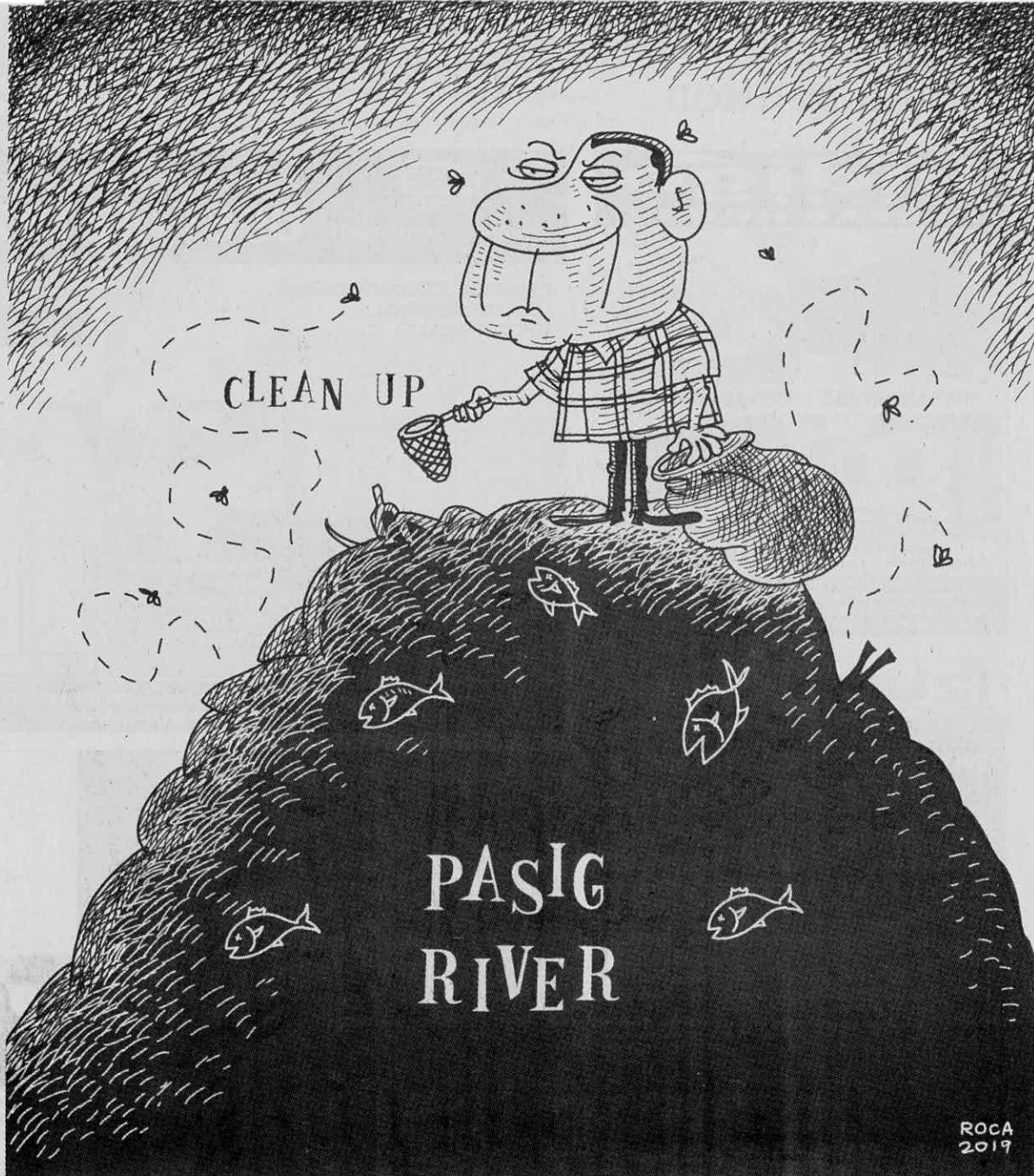
CARTOON

32 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 12

DATE





## AS A MATTER OF FACT

SARA SOLIVEN DE GUZMAN

### Our country is very dirty, it is a haven of many viruses



The main source of filth is our major and minor waterways not to mention our garbage disposal systems where we lack incinerators. Who is the responsible one? Who will be the Joan of Arc?

Let's take the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission's (PRRC) work for example. Last August 28 President Duterte signed Executive Order No. 90 transferring the chairmanship of the PRRC from the Department of Budget and Management to the DENR. The PRRC is primarily tasked to implement programs and projects aimed at reviving the polluted Pasig River.

It has been 20 years since the Executive Order was signed by then President Estrada. The rehabilitation of the Pasig River should have been completed by now. The Singapore River was rehabilitated in just 10 years. They have NO PRRC! When Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew called for a clean-up of Singapore's rivers, which included the Singapore River and the Kallang River in 1977, 4,000 squatters were relocated along with hawkers and vegetable sellers, whose daily waste flowed into the river. The clean-up cost the government \$300 million. Public housing was found for the squatters, while street hawkers were persuaded to move to hawker centers. The government then dredged foul-smelling mud from the banks and the bottom of the river, clearing the debris and other rubbish.

And now, the Pasig River rehabilitation has been transferred to DENR under the leadership of Roy Cimatu after the president fired PRRC head Jose Antonio E. Goitia over allegations of graft and corruption. So, what has Cimatu done so far? He said that he will implement the 2012 Supreme Court ruling to remove the thousands of squatters along the Pasig River. But the Manila Bay Task Force that he heads has done nothing in the past six months (March-August) despite the millions of pesos allotted for it. He has also vowed to address the garbage problem hounding the Pasig River and its tributaries.

So far, the PRRC has already removed more than 30 million kilograms of solid waste since 2012 through resettlement and daily clean-up activities in the Pasig River and its 47 identified tributaries. There is still so much to be done.

A constant and consistent campaign to keep Pasig River clean must be given a serious thought. Look at Singapore! The river cleanup remains a work-in-progress. Last November 26, 2017, during a speech at the 60th anniversary of Berita Harian, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong urged Singaporeans not to pollute the river with litter and trash.

Our leaders must realize that it is not enough to follow directives to get things done. What is important is how to sustain and maintain it till the end. But first things first, we must take action before it is too late and find ourselves in the dumps as we seem to be already in.



## EDITORIAL

### President turns his attention to Pasig River

**P**RESIDENT Duterte, voicing exasperation over the impossibly polluted condition of the Pasig River, announced last Tuesday that he was removing the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission and transferring all its functions and responsibilities to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The river can no longer be cleaned up because there is no zoning, he said. Over the years, the wastes of so many factories and households have been thrown into the river which flows into Manila Bay where its wastes join those of 17 other rivers that end up in the bay.

And yet the Pasig River is such a historic and beautiful part of Manila and the many towns upstream. It is so valued a spot in our history, in fact, that it was made the site of Malacanang, the home of Philippine presidents.

The deterioration of the river goes back many decades. It is said fish began to disappear from the river in the 1930s and by the 1970s, it had begun to give off a smell. All swimming and travelling by boat had stopped by the 1980s. It was declared biologically dead in the 1990s.

The principal reason was that after World War II, shanty towns of people coming from the provinces sprang up all along the river. They and the factories and piggeries and markets that arose all along the river and its many tributaries simply disposed of their wastes into the river. That practice, it may be noted, continues to this day; only recently, so many dead pigs, victims of Asian swine fever, were found floating on the Marikina River on its way to the Pasig.

During the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos in the 1990s, some 700,000 people were relocated from squatter areas to various towns in Bulacan, Laguna, Rizal, Cavite, and Batangas, but most of them returned to other shanty towns along the Pasig to be close to their places of work in Metro Manila.

This is the Pasig River and Manila Bay which President Duterte now wants to clean up, after the government's success in the six-month rehabilitation of Boracay island. But the problem in Metro Manila is a hundred times bigger, that Secretary Roy Cimatu of the DENR said it will take more than ten years to stop all the garbage and the pollution pouring into the bay from the Pasig and the many other rivers in Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Metro Manila, Laguna, and Cavite.

President Joseph Estrada, who succeeded President Ramos in 1998, created the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission in 1998 with the singular job of cleaning up the Pasig. It has evidently failed in this task after all these years. The Pasig is as dirty as ever. There was a plan led by then Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno to set up a ferry service with so many stops along the Pasig, but nothing has come of it, probably because, with the pollution and the smell of the river, many commuters would rather take the buses, jeepneys, and light rails in Metro Manila's traffic-jammed streets.

But President Duterte appears determined to do something about the Pasig problem, especially since he lives right along its banks in Malacanang. He said last Tuesday, "Me, I am just near the Pasig River. Sometimes I take a bath there if I want bacteria in my body to help me become immune."

He was joking of course, but we hope, as in the case of so many other previous jokes, he means to really do something about the dirty, smelly, polluted Pasig River.



**EDITORIAL**

**Ibinaling ng Pangulo ang atensyon sa Ilog Pasig**

**N**AGPAHAYAG ng pagkainis si Pangulong Duterte hinggil sa imposibleng kalagayan ng Ilog Pasig, nang ianunsiyo niya nitong Martes ang pagbuwag sa Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission at pagsalin ng lahat ng tungkulin nito at responsibilidad sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Hindi na magagawa pang malinis ang ilog dahil wala namang zoning, ayon sa Pangulo. Sa mga nakalipas na taon, itinatapon sa ilog ang mga dumi na nagmumula sa maraming pabrika at kabahayan, na dumadaloy patungo sa Manila Bay kung saan nasasama ito sa dumi ng 17 iba pang mga ilog na nakadugtong sa look.

Ito'y sa kabila ng makasaysayan at magandang bahagi ng Ilog Pasig sa Maynila at ang marami pang bayan na dinadaan nito. Sa katunayan, labis itong pinahahalagan bilang parte ng ating kasaysayan, dahil an upang ilagay ang Malacañang sa tabi nito, ang tahanan ng pangulo ng Pilipinas.

Maraming dekada na ang nakararaan nang simulang masira ang ilog. Sinasabing taong 1930 nang maglaho na ang mga isda sa ilog, habang 1970, nagsimula na umano itong mangamoy. Taong 1970, nahinto ang paglalangoy at paglalakbay gamit ang bangka. Hanggang sa ideklara itong 'biologically dead' noong 1990.

Pangunahing dahilan dito ay matapos ng Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig, dumagsa ang maraming tao mula sa mga probinsiya at nanirahan sa paligid ng ilog. Ang mga ito, kasama ng mga pabrika, babuyan, at palengke, na itinayo sa palibot ng ilog at mga kadugtong nitong mga bahagi ng tubig, ay itinatapon lamang ang kanilang mga dumi at basura sa ilog. Ang gawaing ito ay nagpapatuloy hanggang ngayon; kamakailan lamang, maraming patay na baboy, na hinihinalang biktima ng Asian swine fever, ang natagpuang palutang-lutang sa ilog ng Marikina patungo sa Pasig.

Sa panahon ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Fidel V. Ramos noong 1990, nasa 700,000 mga iskwater ang inilipat sa iba't ibang bayan sa Bulacan, Laguna, Rizal, Cavite, at Batangas, ngunit karamihan sa mga ito ay nagbalik lamang sa mga barong-barong sa paligid ng Ilog Pasig kung saan malapit ang kanilang trabaho sa Metro Manila.

Ito ang Ilog Pasig at Manila Bay na nais malinis ni Pangulong Duterte, matapos ang matagumpay na anim na buwang rehabilitasyon sa isla ng Boracay. Ngunit ang problema ng Metro Manila ay daang beses na mas malala, na inihayag ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu na aabutin ng sampung taon upang mahinto ang lahat ng basura at polusyon na bumubuhos sa look mula sa Pasig at sa marami pang ilog mula sa Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Metro Manila, Laguna, at Cavite.

Nilikha ni Pangulong Joseph Estrada, na pumalit kay Pangulong Ramos noong 1998 ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, na may iisang tungkulin na linisin ang ilog. Malinaw na bigo ang komisyon sa tungkuling ito makalipas ang maraming taon. Napakarumi ng Pasig. Mayroong plano sa pangunguna ni Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno na magtayo ng ferry service na may maraming istasyon sa kahabaan ng Pasig, ngunit walang nangyari rito, marahil dulot na rin ng polusyon at matinding amoy ng ilog, mas pipiliin ng mga pasahero na sumakay ng bus, jeep, at tren kahit pa matrapik sa mga lansangan ng Metro Manila.

Gayunman, tila determinado si Pangulong Duterte na gumawa ng hakbang hinggil sa problema ng Pasig, lalo pa't nakatira lamang siya sa gilid nito sa Malacañang. Aniya, nitong Martes, "Me, I am just near the Pasig River. Sometimes I take a bath there if I want bacteria in my body to help me become immune."

Siyempre pa nagbibiro lamang siya, ngunit umaasa tayo, na tulad sa kaso ng maraming iba pa niyang biro, nangangahulugan ito na nais talaga niyang maaksyunan ang marumi, mabaho, at matinding polusyon ng Ilog Pasig.



23 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

## Heaps of plastic plucked from world's beaches on mass cleanup day

PARIS (AFP) – Thousands of volunteers wielding nets and bin bags scoured coasts, parks and riverbanks across the globe Saturday, in a litter-picking drive highlighting the vast quantity of trash dumped worldwide, a day after mass international climate protests.

Campaigners took part in World Cleanup Day from Manila to the Mediterranean, as hundreds of thousands of people across the world take part in demonstrations and activities calling for urgent action on the environment.

Young people have been at the forefront of the movement, with masses of children skipping school on Friday for a global climate strike, which teen activist Greta Thunberg said was "only the beginning."

Some four million people filled city streets around the world on Friday, organizers said, in what was billed as the biggest ever protest against the threat posed to the planet by rising temperatures.

It kicked off a week of climate action called for by Thunberg, who was among several hundred young activists attending a climate summit at the United Nations on Saturday.

The World Cleanup Day on Saturday is an initiative that has got millions into the streets and cleaning up litter across the globe since it began just over a decade ago.

In France, volunteers posted images of their trash hauls on social media – heaps of assorted waste, soft drink cans and plastic containers. –

A climate protest on the streets of Paris attracted some 15,000 people, according to a tally by independent consultancy Occurrence, but the rally was marred by clashes between security forces and a relatively small number of troublemakers. "The conditions for a non-violent march are not in place," Greenpeace, a co-organizer of the event, said on Twitter, as police fired teargas at protesters.

In the Philippine capital, some 10,000 people swept across a long stretch of beach on heavily polluted Manila Bay, clutching sacks they filled with rubbish.

In the Pacific island nation of Fiji, which is among the countries worst affected by sea level rises and has become a vocal advocate for global climate action, people scoured palm-fringed beaches west of the capital Suva, heaving discarded car tyres and engine parts from the coast.

On Australia's Bondi beach, activists sifted through the sand, carting off bits of plastic and cigarette butts.

The mass cleanup is coordinated by the Let's Do It Foundation, which began life in Estonia and says that 18 million people from 157 countries participated in the global cleanup day last year. This year, it says more than 160 countries are taking part.





## **Panawagan ng DENR HINDI TAMANG PAGTATAPON NG BASURA TIGILAN NA**

**NANAWAGAN** sa publiko ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na tigilan na ang patuloy na pagtatapon ng dumi o basura sa mga estero, mga daluyan ng tubig at maging sa mga lansangan.

Sa pahayag ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, walang mangyayaring pagbabago kung hindi titigilan ng publiko ang

nakagisnan na gawain sa hindi tamang pagtatapon ng kanilang mga basura o kung saan-saan lamang.

Sinabi pa ni Cimatu na kahit nagiging matagumpay ang clean-up drive, mas maigi kung manggagaling sa sarili ang disiplina upang hindi na masayang ang pagsisikap na malinis ang kapaligiran.

Paliwanag nito na kung magpapatuloy sa



**SEC. ROY CIMATU**

pagtatapon ang publiko sa mga estero ay mapadpad lamang ito sa Ilog Pasig at maging sa Manila Bay kaya wala rin aniyang saysay kung hindi titigil sa hindi magandang gawi sa pagtatapon ng basura.



23 SEP 2019

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

### **3,743 sakong basura nahakot sa Baseco clean-up drive**

UMABOT ng 3,743 sako ng basura na may timbang na 187,150 kilos ang nahakot sa malawakang paglilinis sa tinatawag na Baseco Beach sa Maynila araw ng Sabado.

Ayon sa Manila Department of Public Services, ang naturang dami ng basura ang nakuha sa Baseco Beach massive clean-up drive hanggang alas-5:00 ng hapon.

Sa video at mga larawan na ibinihagi ng Manila Public Information Office, makikita ang pagsasama ng hanggang 15,000 katao sa paglilinis ng lugar na bahagi ng Tondo.

Ito ay bilang pakikisa sa International Coastal Cleanup Day.

Ang paglilinis sa Baseco Beach, pinangunahan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), ni Manila Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna at Manila Department of Public Services chief Kenneth Amurao.

Naglinis din ang mga tauhan ng iba pang departamento ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila, MMDA personnel at ilang miyembro ng iba't ibang sektor gaya ng mga estudyante.

(Jocelyn Domenden)



23 SEP 2013

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/



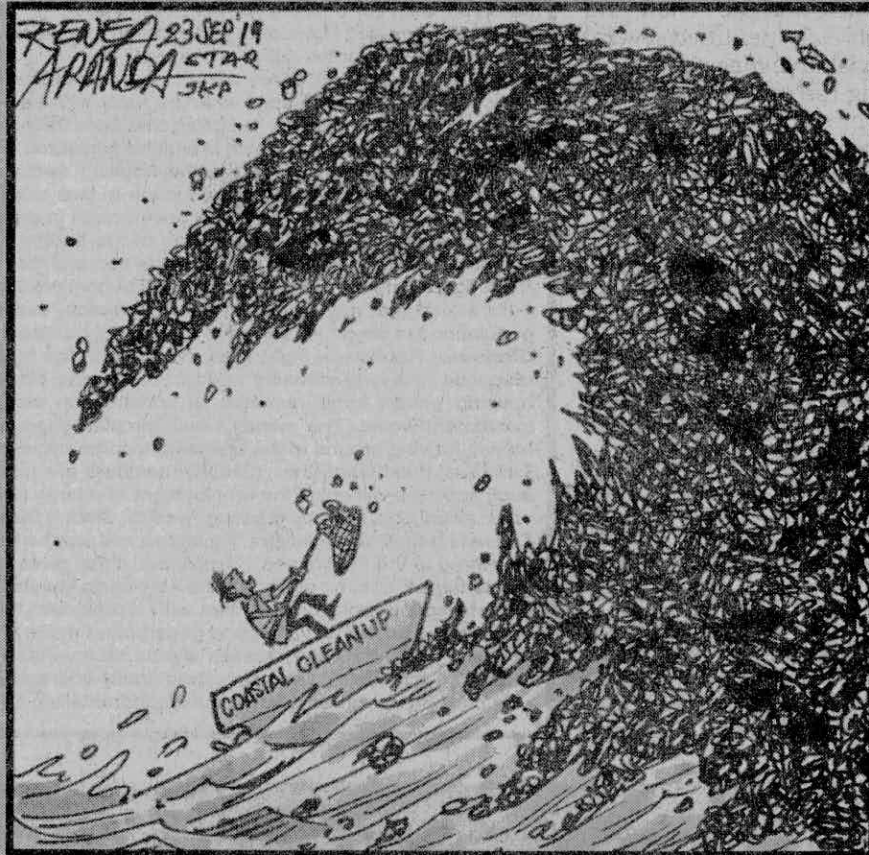
**LIBU-LIBONG** volunteers ang lumahok sa ika-34 *International Coastal Clean-up Day* sa Baseco, Tondo, Manila na may temang bayanihan para sa malinis na karagatan. *Ang galeng!*  
(Jun Guillermo)



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE



## Coastal cleanup

As the country marked the 47th anniversary of the declaration of martial law last Saturday, about 20,000 people gathered around Manila Bay for a different type of observance: International Coastal Cleanup or ICC Day.

The special day is now seen as the world's most extensive volunteer effort to promote ocean health, with over 100 countries participating. The Philippines has been among the most active participants in the event, which was started in 1986 by the US-based environmental group Ocean Conservancy. This is due in part to the fact that the country, with its extensive coastline, is also among the most threatened by rising ocean temperatures and sea levels.

Beyond the annual observance, the Philippine government continues its cleanup of Boracay. In Metro Manila, about 10,000 people participated in the launch on Jan. 27 this year of the government's ambitious program to clean up Manila Bay, including the rivers and other waterways that drain into the bay.

During every ICC observance, tons of garbage are collected from Manila Bay. This indicates that the clean-up effort isn't trickling down to communities around the bay and the waterways that flow into

### EDITORIAL

it. Encouraging such communities to clean up should be the job of local government

units, starting with barangay offices. In Metro Manila and other urban areas facing the sea, this task often goes hand-in-hand with governance in informal settlements. The so-called Battle for a Trash-Free Manila Bay must include a program to deal with the slum communities that use the bay and waterways as their septic tank and garbage receptacle.

Garbage piles up even in waterways that run through communities where there are no squatters. Local governments must intensify efforts to enforce ordinances on proper garbage disposal. Garbage collection must also be enhanced, with recycling and segregation encouraged. Ordinances against littering must be enforced, with violators apprehended and appropriate penalties imposed. Alongside this, garbage receptacles must be installed at strategic spots and the trash collected regularly. People litter because they can't find a place to put their trash.

Outside the cities, there are areas that are facing the risk of becoming another Boracay before the cleanup. With a clear plan and political will to carry it out, it's possible to clean up coastal areas.



## The Manila Times www.manilatimes.net

# Group opposes building of intl airport in Bulacan

THE Alyansa para sa Pagtatanggol ng Kabuhayan, Paninirahan at Kalikasan sa Manila Bay (AKAP KA-Manila Bay) has raised its opposition to the construction of an international airport in Bulacan.

“The AKAP KA-Manila Bay is an alliance that favors restoration, instead of reclamation, of the coastal waters of Manila Bay and other areas targeted for development under the National Reclamation Plan

It is also a member of the People’s Network for the Integrity of Coastal Habitats and Ecosystems (People’s Niche).

“We deplore the swift approval of the Department of Transportation (DoTr)-SMC agreement, ignoring the pressing ecological concerns raised about the project as it would intensify flooding issues and accelerate the sinking of Bulacan. This is not a project that will bring economic prosperity but major and permanent damages to life for many residents in coastal and low-lying areas around Manila Bay,” the alliance said.

SMC is San Miguel Corp., which is behind the building of the international airport in Bulakan town of Bulacan province.

Teody Bacon, president of Samahan ng mga Mangingisda at Mamamayan sa Larian ng Bulacan, said “They (DoTr and SMC) have finalized the requirements and secured permits for the project, yet they have not divulged the complete picture including [what they] plan to do with the residents who will be left without houses because of this [airport project].”

“About 150 housing slots were promised by our local government but that would not be enough for all of us,” he added.

Meanwhile, Rodel Alvarez, spokesman for Pamalakaya-Bulacan, said, “As the

airport project would reclaim hectares of productive fishing grounds, where would we go out to fish? Hear the plea of the poor fisherfolk: we do not want an airport that would eliminate the already diminishing public fishing grounds, the very source of livelihood and food security for many communities around Manila Bay.”

“The AKAP KA-Manila Bay also announced that that “Bulacan coastal residents, fisher folk and their supporters will hold a picket dialogue at the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on September 26 in San Fernando, Pampanga to demand the revocation of the issuance of the environmental compliance certificate for the land development project by Silvertides Holdings, a subcontracting company of SMC, to pave way for the construction of the airport.”

During the signing of contract for the construction of the P740-billion New Manila International Airport with officials of the DoTr led by Secretary Arthur Tugade and San Miguel Corp. President Ramon Ang, some residents who will be displaced are optimistic that the administration and its concessionaire will keep their promise of providing them a decent relocation site and livelihood.

It was learned that some 200 families had been promised free housing, financial and education assistance and livelihood by the SMC and the Duterte administration.

The project will be built on a 2,500-hectare property in Bulacan, Bulacan, and is expected to help decongest Manila’s Ninoy Aquino International Airport and to also create thousands of jobs for Bulakenyos and for residents of nearby provinces.

**FREDERICK SILVERIO**



**SABAY** na nanumpa sa tungkulin sina DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda at Ma. Jesusa Antiporda bilang first vice district governor at second vice district governor ng Lions Clubs International District 301-A2, Philippines kasabay sa 37th Anniversary at 38th Induction Ceremonies sa Okada Manila Grand Ballroom kamakalawa ng gabi na sinaksihan ng kanilang pamilya.

## Soccsksargen folks cautioned vs 'unhealthy smog'

### from Indonesia

**G**ENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Soccsksargen has cautioned residents over last weekend about the possible spread of "unhealthy smog" in the area due to the raging forest fires in Indonesia.

In an advisory, EMB-Soccsksargen said the intense forest fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan in recent weeks could cause "high levels of air pollution" to be blown toward the southern part of the country, including Soccsksargen, in the coming days.

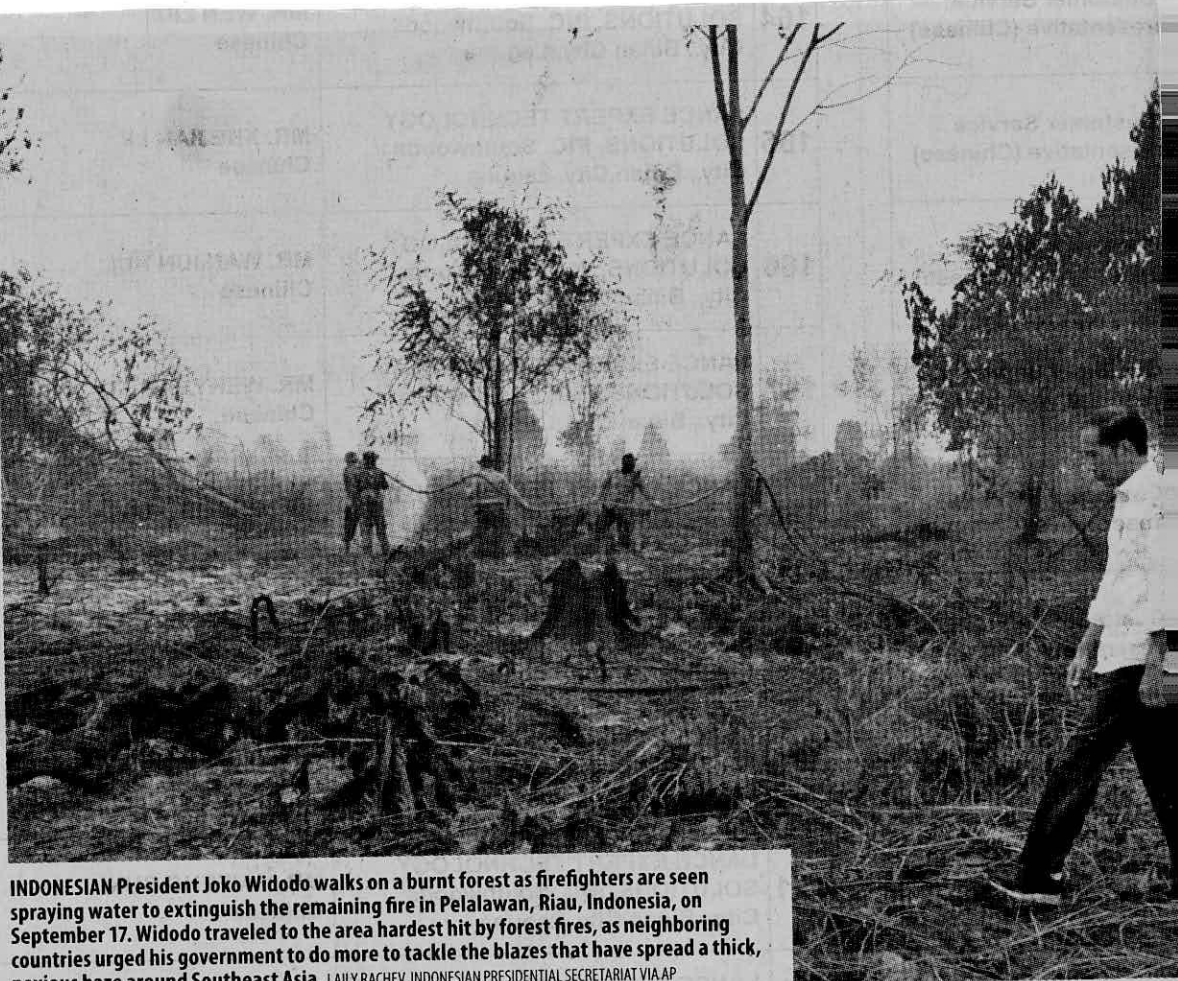
EMB-Soccsksargen said it has been conducting daily air quality monitoring in at least three sites as an initial intervention. The monitoring stations are in this city, Koronadal City and Tupi town in South Cotabato.

EMB-Soccsksargen noted last week that the air concentration in the three sites remain under normal levels, and considered as "still in good and fair condition."

"[The air quality level] does not pose an [adverse] impact to human health," the agency declared.

With the result, it advised the general public to maintain normal activities.

"As for healthy precautions, sensitive individuals especially children, elderly, pregnant women and those with heart and lung conditions, are advised to reduce



**INDONESIAN President Joko Widodo walks on a burnt forest as firefighters are seen spraying water to extinguish the remaining fire in Pelalawan, Riau, Indonesia, on September 17. Widodo traveled to the area hardest hit by forest fires, as neighboring countries urged his government to do more to tackle the blazes that have spread a thick, noxious haze around Southeast Asia.** LAILY RACHEV, INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT VIA AP

prolonged or strenuous outdoor activities," it said.

Engr. Alex Jimenez, EMB-Soccsksargen director, assured residents that it would continue the daily monitoring of the air quality level in the area as part of their mandate.

"We will make this information

available to the public as soon as we get them," Jimenez said.

Based on EMB-Soccsksargen's monitoring, the particulate matter (PM10) in the air as of Saturday in Koronadal City was at 63.81 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) or under the "fair" level.

PM10 particles, often described as coarse particles, are smaller than 10 micrometers in diameter. The international standard for PM10 is 60 ug/Ncm.

It was measured at 37.28 ug/Ncm in Tupi and 45.26 ug/Ncm in this city or under "good" level.

**Allen Estabillo/PNA**



## PHL rallies intl support to protect endangered species; official awarded

**G**ENEVA—The Philippines successfully rallied support for international cooperation to protect Philippine animals threatened with extinction during the 18th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), held in August in Geneva.

During the event, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official was also recognized for her role in strengthening the country's conservation efforts and helping put a stop to domestic ivory trade.

Supported by other countries, the Philippines was able to include local species of otters and butterflies in Appendix 1 of the Convention, and geckos and wedgefish in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 offers the highest protection to species already threatened with extinction by limiting trade and requiring the issuance of export and import permits in exceptional cases, while Appendix 2 includes animals that may face extinction due to uncontrolled or illegal trade.

Meanwhile, former DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau-Wildlife Resources Division division chief Josefina de Leon received the Clark Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Award from the Species Survival Network and Animal Welfare Institute for

her crucial role in strengthening wildlife law enforcement in the Philippines. Apart from developing standards and protocols for wildlife law enforcers, de Leon was among the key figures in the destruction of more than four tons of elephant tusks seized in 2013.

Ambassador Evan Garcia, Philippine permanent representative to the UN and other organizations in Geneva, received the award on her behalf in a side event held on August 20, 2019.

The ambassador also hailed the inclusion of Philippine animals in the CITES appendices.

"The listing is a victory not just for the animals whose survival is endangered because of unmitigated trade, but for present and future generations whose access to the benefits of biodiversity rests on our current resolve and ability to recognize threats, respond quickly to dynamic situations, and modify destructive patterns of consumption," Garcia said.

Members of the Philippine delegation included representatives from the DENR, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, Save Philippine Seas, Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines, Center for Sustainability PH Inc., Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines Inc., and Crocodylus Porosus Philippines Inc.





**AMBASSADOR Evan P. Garcia (second from left), Philippine permanent representative to the United Nations and other organizations in Geneva, receives the Clark Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Award last month on behalf of DENR official Josefina de Leon, whose efforts to protect endangered species placed the country at the forefront of curbing illegal wildlife trade. With him are (from left) Animal Welfare Institute's DJ Schubert, CITES Director General Ivonne Higuero and Species Survival Network's Will Travers.**

ALESSANDRO PONZO/LARGE MARINE VERTEBRATES RESEARCH INSTITUTE PHILIPPINES INC.



## 32 YEARS OF INTL COOPERATION PROTECT WORLD'S OZONE LAYER, BIODIVERSITY

By DR. THERESA MUNDITA S. LIM  
*Executive Director,  
Asean Centre for Biodiversity*

**O**N September 16, 32 years ago, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was adopted to regulate the production and consumption of man-made ozone-depleting substances.

As of yet, the only United Nations treaty to have been ratified by all 197 countries of the world, including the 10 Asean member-states (AMS), the Montreal Protocol was humanity's response to the alarming havoc these chemicals are wreaking on the stratospheric ozone layer, the Earth's protective shield against harmful levels of ultra-violet (UV) radiation from the sun.

According to the 2018 Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion report, parts of the ozone layer have recovered at a rate of 1 percent to 3 percent every decade since 2000.

The Parties' commitment to the Montreal Protocol has led to the phase-out of 99 percent of ozone-depleting chemicals in refrigerators, air-conditioners, and many other products.

The Montreal Protocol is considered to be one of the most successful international environmental treaties in history.

This year's theme for the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is "32 Years and Healing."

The Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) joins the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in celebrating over 30 years of successful international cooperation to protect the world's ozone layer.

The ACB is an intergovernmental organization facilitating cooperation and coordination among the AMS, and with regional and international organizations, on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such natural resources.

As an organization that facilitates international cooperation, the ACB recognises the potent power and the global impact of the

Parties' commitment to the Montreal Protocol. As an organization working to halt biodiversity loss, the ACB welcomes the continued healing of the ozone layer, the protective benefits of which reap gains for biodiversity.

Without the ozone layer's protection, the sun's UV rays penetrate deep into oceans, damaging coral reefs and adversely affecting marine life, a vital source of the world's food supply and livelihood.

The depletion of the ozone layer also affects plant growth, disrupting photosynthesis.

Uncontrolled ozone depletion significantly reduces crop yield worldwide. It also threatens the wild flora that serve as forest cover and provide various ecosystems services.

UV radiation also contributes to the loss of fauna globally. According to a 2017 Climate Change Responses report, UV rays are one of the drivers of the declining numbers of amphibians worldwide.

In the Asean region, the ACB commends the AMS for their efforts to restore and protect the ozone layer. The 2017 Asean State of the Environment report shows that the consumption by AMS ozone-depleting substances has dropped over a five-year period.

The 2018 Asean Cooling Summit that was held in Bangkok, Thailand, tackled the use of energy-efficient and climate-friendly air-conditioning technologies in the region.

Currently, most air-conditioning systems use hydrofluorocarbons, which have been found to be potent greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, another threat to biodiversity.

The summit brought together leaders from government, business, civil society, and academe to discuss sustainable solutions to the growing demand in air-conditioning in the Asean.

While much work still needs to be done in protecting biodiversity and securing a thriving world for present and future generations, our decades-long cooperation that has led to the healing of our ozone layer is a gain we celebrate today for our planet and our future.

Happy World Ozone Day!



# DOLPHIN, WHALE COLONIES SPOTTED IN SARANGANI BAY

**A**ROUND 270 dolphins and whales have been recently spotted in various parts of Sarangani Bay by marine biologists and divers from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Soccsksargen and its partner agencies.

More species, including those considered critical and vulnerable, are believed to be thriving in the area based on the results of the third quarter monitoring of the bay.

Based on the DENR report, 50 to 200 Fraser's or Sarawak dolphins were monitored in the waters of General Santos City and Glan, 40 to 60 spinner dolphins in Glan and Malapatan, six Risso dolphin in Glan, four pygmy killer whales and two dwarf/pygmy sperm whales in Malapatan.

A protected area under Republic Act 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Area System Act of 2018, the bay covers 215,950 hectares with a 226.4-km coastline, embracing Sarangani's coastal municipalities and General Santos City.

The quarterly monitoring was initiated by the DENR and the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape to track the daily activities of establishments within the bay.

The team is composed of personnel from the DENR-Office of the Protected Area Superintendent, Bureau of Fisheries



**DOLPHINS** are swimming beside a boat in Sarangani Bay

and Aquatic Resources, Sarangani's Environmental Conservation and Protection Center, and the General Santos City Environment and Natural Resources Office.

According to DENR Regional Executive Director Sabdullah Abubacar, the latest monitoring showed that Sarangani Bay remains a key marine biodiversity area, which

should be protected against the proliferation of potentially hazardous wastes.

"DENR alone cannot protect it. We have to synergize our work and activities to help and preserve the bay," he said, reiterating the need for local stakeholders to continue working together to improve its ecosystem.

Abubacar, who chairs the PAMB,

directed the Environmental Management Bureau-12 to provide issuances, violations and actions taken on establishments to determine its accomplishment in terms of enforcement.

The monitoring team also observed nonbiodegradable waste materials, and spotted several fishing vessels conducting various activities within the bay, which may harm the cetaceans and marine organisms.

Sarangani Gov. Steve Chiongbian Solon, who is also the PAMB vice chairman, pointed out that local government units in the area should intensify efforts to prevent wastes and conduct regular patrol to regulate the activities within the bay.

He committed to provide financial assistance to the agency for the conduct of monthly monitoring of marine mammals.

"Rules should be strictly implemented, so we can achieve economic development and preservation of the protected seascape at the same time," he said.

Regarded as the diving haven of Soccsksargen region, Sarangani Bay's coral resources cover more than 2,293 hectares spread over 20 coral reef areas with about 60 important live hard coral genera, 411 reef species in 46 families.

Its seagrass cover is placed at 912 hectares, with 11 species.



# A flat earth and the Hell of Tartarus

**T**he scene conjured in my mind is of a flat earth with a landscape entirely of a vast ocean, at the edge of which is the abyss. A solitary ship with all of humanity on board drifts, with no island in sight upon which it could anchor for safety. But, instead of maneuvering the vessel away from the abyss, mankind is steering it toward the precipice.

The cramped passengers who are exposed to the elements on the upper deck are experiencing the increasing fury of the winds and the intensifying turbulence of the waters as the ship heads in the cliff's direction. But merriment continues undisturbed in the sheltered confines of the luxurious lower decks.

These are the images that percolate in my mind when I read articles and view images of how human beings are making our world increasingly uninhabitable, how the human race is driving a dreadful number of flora and fauna to extinction, and how mankind is pushing itself to extinction.

Scientists estimate that "150-200 species of plant, insect, bird and mammal become extinct each day." A United Nations agency is sounding the alarm that we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction in the history of our planet. Experts are issuing the warning that what's happening is "greater than anything the world has experienced since the vanishing of the dinosaurs nearly 65 million years ago."

Heart-wrenching images of threatened wildlife proliferate on the internet. There's a picture of a mother orangutan trying in vain to ward off a heavy equipment that just felled a tree that the primate has been using for dwelling. There's an image of an emaciated



## FLEA MARKET OF IDEAS

JOEL RUIZ BUTUYAN

polar bear, its ribs visible, walking wobbly on land because there are no more ice caps it can scramble on to catch fish in its habitat.

There's a picture of a Sumatran rhinoceros, beautiful with its reddish-brown hair, that is near extinction because of dwindling rain forests. There are numerous pictures of turtles, whales and other sea animals that either perish or suffer debilitating injuries because of plastic rubbish or fishnets strewn in the open sea. There are pictures of dead seabirds coated in a thick smudge of oil spill.

According to satellite data, forests are being destroyed at a shocking rate of about 8 million hectares per year. That's the staggering equivalent of 27 soccer fields every minute, says the World Wildlife Fund.

With this rate of deforestation, it's no wonder that the number of species getting extinct every single day is nothing but dreadful. Imagine the number of ecosystems—many of them providing food and shelter to unique and

irreplaceable living things—that is forever erased from the face of our planet because of the destruction of our forests.

An ecosystem refers to all living things that interact with one another in a given landscape, including the land, water and atmosphere on which they flourish. These include the ground microorganisms, insects, plants and animals, whose variety and numbers are being decimated at alarming rates.

At a time when our addiction to fossil fuel calls for intensified efforts to increase our forest cover, we are accelerating instead their obliteration. Side by side with efforts to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel, the massive planting of trees is touted as the single most effective and pragmatic way to counteract the ominous warming of our planet. But efforts in this regard are still being done largely for cosmetic purposes and mainly in a leisurely way. Mankind should see how Mother Earth is in bad need of critical care, and the massive planting of trees is the manner by which we can contribute to its effective treatment.

The ancient Greeks believed that the Earth was flat, and its farthest end was an infernal abyss called the Hell of Tartarus. The abyss was a pit of suffering where those who committed terrible crimes were punished by the gods of the underworld. With the way we are destroying our world, we may yet prove that our planet is indeed flat, and we are fated to fall into the abyss of Tartarus to pay for our grave sins against Mother Earth.

Comments to [fleamarketofideas@gmail.com](mailto:fleamarketofideas@gmail.com)



# A year after killer landslide, victims seek permanent homes

## Naga City gov't has yet to complete relocation site for displaced families

By Ador Vincent Mayol  
@inquirervisayas

NAGA CITY, CEBU—There are times when Narciso Siton could barely sleep. “I could still vividly recall what happened. I was a witness to it,” he said in Cebuano.

Although a year had passed, the 50-year-old fruit vendor could not forget what happened on the morning of Sept. 28 when more than 2 hectares of land covered more than 50 houses, killed 78 people and displaced 1,947 families or 8,091 people.

He was preparing breakfast in their house at Sitio Sindulan in Barangay Tinaan here when he felt the earth shake before 6 a.m.

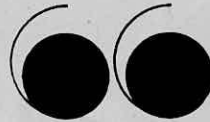
What followed was a nightmare: A portion of the mountain collapsed and rushed down into houses below.

Minutes later, Siton lost his wife, three children, four siblings and 19 relatives in the tragedy.

“I saw the mountain collapsed and covered members of my family,” said Siton, who survived with his two other children age 18 and 12.

While he still mourns for the loss of his family members, nothing much has happened for the victims a year after the killer landslide. The city has yet to complete the relocation site for the 213 of the 418 families who were removed from the permanent danger zone.

They would be beneficiaries of the 50 houses that would be built by the Naga City government and 192 houses from the National Housing Authority and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board on a



**Never let anyone  
live on public land**

**Armando Malicse**  
MGB official in Central Visayas

property donated by Cebu province in Barangay Tinaan.

The rest of the 205 families opted to avail themselves of the P150,000 assistance from the city government so they could look for a place where they could build their houses.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Visayas (MGB-7) was still removing loose materials to stabilize the slope affected by landslide.

“We have been successful [in stabilizing the slope]. We’re not totally done yet but the situation in the area is much better now.”

Armando Malicse, chief of the MGB-7 Mine Safety, Environment and Social Development Division, said a hazard reduction plan was being implemented at the ground zero to stabilize the slope affected by the landslide.

### P4.5-B lawsuit

The court is still hearing the P4.5-billion lawsuit filed by Naga City residents against private and public entities believed responsible for the landslide.

Sued were Cemex Holdings Philippines Inc. and its subsidiaries, Apo Land and Quarry

Corp. (ALQC) and Apo Cement Corp.; the MGB in Central Visayas; and the governments of Naga City and Cebu province.

The lawsuit is asking Cemex, ALQC and Apo Cement to pay the landslide victims P4 billion in damages and P500 million in rehabilitation fund for the landslide area at Barangay Tinaan in Naga.

City residents believed the quarry operations of Cemex and its subsidiaries were to be blamed for the landslide.

ALQC has stopped operations since the landslide in September 2018 on orders of Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and the Naga City government.

### Lessons

ALQC, however, was tasked by the MGB central office and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to implement the hazard reduction plan in the landslide site by hauling loose debris to build infrastructure to protect the community from possibilities of further erosion.

Malicse said the local governments and people should learn from the lessons of the

landslide, noting that tragedies could be avoided if laws and regulations were followed.

“Never let anyone live on public lands,” he said.

He, however, admitted that at least 70 percent of Naga’s land area is public land or those which have not been titled or are outside the commerce of man.

“Dwelling on public land is risky. But we can’t totally blame local governments because people build their houses on public land without knowing the risks it entails,” he said.

### Master plan

Recognizing that the city has several danger or red zones which are prone to landslides and should be off-limits to people, the local government is drafting a master plan as part of its disaster preparedness program.

“The master plan is ongoing. We can’t formulate it overnight because it’s very complex and comprehensive,” said acting Naga City Mayor Kristine Vanessa Chiong.

Part of its disaster preparedness after the landslide was to tap the University of Philippines’ Resilience Institute to revise its comprehensive land use plan.

Chiong said they also launched a greening program which would focus on planting and nurturing of narra trees, the official city tree, and the planting and propagation of bamboos in disaster-prone areas to lessen landslide.

“We have to really prepare for disasters such as this,” she said. INQ



## ATENEO-LED RESEARCH TEAM DISCOVERS FERN THAT ABSORBS ARSENIC AND COPPER

**A** research team of Filipino environmental scientists, led by Ateneo de Manila University Asst. Prof. Rene Claveria, has achieved a breakthrough in using plants to remove metal contaminants in the soil.

Pteris melanocaulon, a native fern, was initially determined as a metallophyte—a plant capable of growing in soils even when there's a high concentration of metals. In a copper-gold mining area as study site, the fern was discovered to have an ability to accumulate copper," Claveria said. "What we discovered much later, is that this fern can also accumulate high levels of arsenic."

Claveria and members of his team, Dr. Teresita Perez (Ateneo de Manila University), Dr. Dennis Apuan (University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines-Cagayan de Oro), Mary Jane Apuan (Xavier University Cagayan de Oro), and Ellaine Castillo Perez (Institute of Biology, University of the Philippines), observed the fern's ability to tolerate toxic levels of arsenic in mining areas in Suri-



The copper and arsenic-accumulating fern Pteris melanocaulon, thrives very well in abandoned mining areas in Surigao and Cebu.

gao and Cebu.

Dr. Augustine Doronilla, a DOST Balikscientist from the University of Melbourne who also mentored the team, was instrumental in the discovery process.

"It was Dr. Doronilla who introduced to us to phytoremedi-

ation or using plants to remove and immobilize contaminants in soil and groundwater," Claveria said. Doronilla, he said, spoke of fern's ability as an accumulator.

In 2014, the research team found Pteris melanocaulon to be an efficient copper accumulator. Hoping to dig deeper into the plant's tolerance to toxic compounds, Claveria and his team sought to assess fern's ability as an arsenic accumulator.

With funding from DOST-PCIEERD, the team was given access to field surveys and sampling. They found that Pteris melanocaulon was able to grow in soils that were contaminated with copper, and other elements such as arsenic. These observations were confirmed on potted experiments where different concentrations of copper and arsenic solutions were made as soil amendments. Findings show that the fern's roots and leaves were not affected.

"It is the first type of fern discovered, to accumulate copper in the roots, and arsenic in the leaves," Claveria said.



## Bataan youth hold mass action vs coal-fired plants

**LIMAY, Bataan:** Thirty young men and women, joined by some adults, held here on Sunday a sit-down protest against the operation of coal-fired power plants in Bataan while questioning the cutting of trees along the Roman Highway.

The protesters silently held various placards in front of coal-fired power plants in Limay town.

*"Ako na nakabalot ng itim ay simbolo na ang planta ng coal ay nag-eemit ng maruming usok at napupunta ito sa komunidad na*

*malapit sa planta. Nadadamay ang mga tao na naninirahan sa komunidad (I am wrapped in black to symbolize that coal-fired power plants emit hazardous smoke that find its way to communities near the plants. It affects all those living in the communities),"* Jewong Capatoy, coordinator of Young Bataenos Environmental Advocacy Network (YBEAN), said.

He recalled that in January 2017, an ashfall allegedly coming from

a coal plant affected residents of Barangay Lamao in Limay.

Jess Dizon, YBEAN spokesman, said they were holding the sit-down strike as part of the observance of the weeklong Global Climate Strike, from September 20 to 27.

He added that others who joined the protest came from various schools and communities that were affected by the presence of the coal-fired power plants.

Dizon said they were pushing for renewable energy for genera-

tion of electricity.

She added that there are three coal-fired power plants operating in Bataan — two in Limay and one in Mariveles — and there are alleged plans for more plants in Barangay Lusong and Barangay Biaan in Mariveles.

Dizon said the electric power consumption of Bataan is only 30 to 60 megawatts and yet 740 megawatts are generated by the Limay plant and 660 megawatts by Mariveles.

**ERNIE B. ESCONDE**



## Preserving Makiling's forest

**T**OYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) recently conducted tree planting in its 10-hectare adopted area inside the Makiling Botanic Gardens at the University of the Philippines Los Baños in Laguna.

A total of 40 volunteers from TMP and TMP Foundation planted hundreds of seedlings to contribute to the preservation of Mount Makiling, an Asean heritage site and home to a diverse species of flowering plants, ferns, mosses, insects and animals.

The activity was part of "All-Toyota Green Wave Project," an initiative by all Toyota affiliates around the world, which aims to contribute to the restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Besides tree planting, TMP also implements other programs aligned with the Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050, which focuses on achieving zero environmental impact in all aspects of its operations and creating a future society in harmony with nature.







STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

**Daily  
Tribune**  
www.DailyTribune.com



09-23-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

## Baguio protects remaining forests preserves

By Aldwin Quitasol

BAGUIO CITY – Vast tracts of forested land identified as protected zones in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) of the city need to be shielded from lot speculators and encroachers who may take interest in acquiring the land illegally.

City Planning and Development Coordinator Evelyn Cayat revealed that the public lands covered by pine trees have a larger aggregate area than the city's parks, adding that these have been designated as protected forests.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) had been properly informed of the existence and situation of these protected zones as part of the CLUP documents furnished the agency and it is assumed that the agency

will work for their protection.

The inventory will be turned over to the City Environment and Parks Management Office (CEPMO) for adoption of measures to protect the land from encroachers.

Cayat assured that the tracts of land have not been titled as the titling procedure would require that documents pass through her office for the issuance of the mandatory clearance.

CEPMO Assistant Department Head Rhenan Diwas said that as part of their new program, they plan to clear forest reservations of shrubs and transform them into picnic or hiking spots to make them accessible to people, similar to the Camp John Hay forest reserve.

"With this program, we hope that the people's constant presence in these places can be a deterrent against squatters," Diwas said.



# Filipino students join climate strike

## Students stand up for Earth

Filipino students joined the Fridays for Future climate strike inspired by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg as the United Nations got ready for a climate summit in New York this week. Climate activists in Eastern Visayas called on older generations not to allow supertyphoons like "Yolanda" to be the new normal, while a lone striker in Southern Tagalog urged higher awareness of the worst effects of climate change. —STORY BY JHESSET O. ENANO

By Jhesset O. Enano  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

TACLOBAN CITY—Nearly six years after Supertyphoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan), Giela Ann Delleva still breaks into tears whenever she remembers what her family went through after the most powerful tropical cyclone to hit land flattened her hometown of Guiuan in Samar province.

"It was so difficult because our hometown suddenly felt unfamiliar," she said.

Delleva was only 12 when Yolanda, with monstrous winds of more than 300 kilometers per hour, made the first of six landfalls in Guiuan on Nov. 7, 2013.

"It doesn't feel like six years ago," Delleva, now 18 and a college student said, wiping away her tears. "It feels like it all happened just yesterday."

### Struggle to rebuild lives

Stories of surviving one of the world's most powerful storms are the single thread that links the lives of people in Eastern Visayas, where the struggle to rebuild lives after losing loved ones and homes persists.

For the young people who had witnessed the devastation, Yolanda ushered in a cruel awakening to the catastrophic effects of climate change.

On Friday, as they gathered and raised their voices at a climate strike here, their painful memories, along with their shared uncertainties about the future, served as backdrop for their calls to the local government to treat the climate crisis as an emergency.

They were not alone. They joined nearly 4 million young people in more than 150 countries in a global action from Sept. 20 to 27 inspired mainly by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg.

The young climate activist began the Fridays for Future strike in front of her country's parliament over a year ago. She was 15 when she took time off from school to demonstrate in front of the Swedish parliament, holding up a sign calling for stronger climate action.

After Thunberg addressed the 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference, student climate strikes took place every week in other countries.

### Global phenomenon

It has since snowballed into a global phenomenon.

Ronan Napoto, a 21-year-old who was among the principal organizers of the local strike, said that more than anyone else, people in Eastern Visayas knew and felt the effects of the climate crisis.

"Yolanda was the first time I felt that it was the end of ev-

erything, that I won't be able to go to school, that I won't be able to pursue my dreams," he said.

Napoto, who was 15 when Yolanda struck, said the young survivors wanted their stories and voices to serve as inspiration for others to act with urgency on the climate crisis.

"It's scary to think that Yolanda would be the new normal," he said. "We don't want anyone else to experience what we did."

Government figures had placed the death toll at 6,300, with more than 1,000 missing, but residents and people's organizations believe the deaths are actually twice or triple in number, with children and other vulnerable residents of the region bearing the brunt of the disaster.



SOLO EFFORT Fifteen-year-old Mary Therese Catapang of Calapan City holds a one-child strike against climate change. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### Not just victims

But for Marinel Ubaldo, who lived through the destruction brought by Yolanda in her town of Salcedo in Eastern Samar, the young people's collective action is to show that they are not just victims.

"We're not just vulnerable or marginalized people. We are standing up for our own ... We are not just simply on social media, but we are actually watching what the adults are doing," said the 22-year-old climate activist.

The bigger challenge, she said, is the deafness of policy-makers and corporations to the voice of the youth clamoring for a better future. "Even if we are already knocking on their doors, they are still not listening to us," she said.

More than 14,000 kilometers away in New York City,



Pg-2 Filipino students join climate strike

where Thunberg addressed a 200,000-strong crowd of young protesters, the words of the Swedish climate activist resonated with the young people here in Tacloban, inspiring them to stand up for the planet.

Their creative placards reflected their fear for what lies ahead of them, but also their hope for a better future.

"There is no Planet B," one sign read, while another said, "Yolanda changed my life. Don't let another Yolanda change yours."

**'Woke' generation**

Helen Ruth Chua, whose coastal home in Tacloban City was among those swept away by the storm, said she felt Yolanda had left behind a "woke" generation.

"They say we're just young, what can we do? But I refuse to conform with that notion," the 21-year-old college graduate said, as she carried a placard that called for "system change, not climate change."

Chua added: "Instead of feeling afraid for the future, I feel more enlightened to do something."

In the City of Calapan, Oriental Mindoro province, Grade 10 student Mary Therese Catapang said Thunberg's activism had inspired her to persevere despite people's comments that she was too young to care about the environment.

"Sometimes I cry because I feel so alone in the classroom. I keep encouraging, some listen, but they [don't take any action]," Catapang, 15, said.

In front of city hall on Friday, Catapang said she was begging the local government to exert more effort to raise environmental awareness in schools and in the whole city, especially in rural areas.

**Unthinkable future events**

"Most schools are not really environment-friendly based on my data gathering, so I want to challenge the city government to take the lead in urging them to change their systems as soon as possible," Catapang said.

"What could happen after 10 years is already unthinkable. Supertyphoons and El Niño, which occur in the Philippines, are already manifestations of the worst effects of climate change," she said.

Emily Catapang, Mary Therese's mother, said she left her youngest child at the city hall after writing her adviser for permission to participate in the climate strike.

"It's sad that she went alone. Those who had committed to join her did not arrive," Emily said.

She said she and her husband allowed Mary Therese to join the climate strike "in solidarity

with hundreds of thousands of youths all over the world [who are demanding] urgent climate action" from their governments.

"We support our child's environmental advocacy, and we are proud of her for taking a stand for our one and only planet," she said.

**UN climate summit**

On Saturday, several hundred young activists, including Thunberg, gathered for a climate summit at the United Nations in New York, chiding older generations for doing too little to curb carbon emissions.

The United Nations had invited 500 young activists and entrepreneurs to take part in the meeting, the first of its kind, though some were unable to attend after being denied US visas, a point raised by the organizers.

It came days before a climate action summit that UN chief Antonio Guterres had called to seek greater commitments from world leaders on reducing their greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris accord to avert runaway global warming.

The tone for Saturday's event was set by an impassioned speech by Argentine activist Bruno Rodriguez, 19, who led school strikes in his native country.

"The climate and ecological crisis is the political crisis of our time, it is the economic crisis of our time and it is the cultural crisis of our time," he said, as Guterres, who was billed as the "keynote listener," watched on.

"Many times, we hear that

our generation is going to be the one in charge of dealing with the problems that current leaders have created, and we will not wait passively to become that future: The time is now for us to be leaders."

**'United, unstoppable'**

Thunberg spoke first but briefly, saying she wanted to give more time to others.

"We showed we are united and young people are unstoppable," said the 16-year-old, who will also address Monday's summit.

The corridors of the United Nations were filled on Saturday with young people in formal suits and ties, dresses and traditional wear from their home countries, and others wearing simple T-shirts and jeans.

"This is the change, and it's coming," said Lalita Purbhoo-Junggee, a green entrepreneur from Mauritius, who turns billboards and textile waste into fashionable bags.

The day also saw young innovators proposing solutions, pitching their ideas to panels from leading global companies like Google.

But corporations also came under fire for their ties to the oil and gas industries.

**Microsoft pricked**

During one testy exchange, Kathleen Ma, a 23-year-old delegate who lives in New York, turned to a representative from Microsoft, which this week announced a deal with Chevron and oil field services company Schlumberger to provide cloud computing services.

"Do you care more about getting contracts from fossil fuel companies than you care

about youth? Do you care more about profits than you care about us?" she asked, to wide applause.

Lucas Joppa, Microsoft's chief environmental officer, thanked her for the question, replying: "That's one that the entire tech sector, and everybody in the world we live in today which is predicated upon an oil and gas economy has to answer. It's one that you'll be hearing more about both from Microsoft and our peers in the broader tech sector as this moves forward."

Rodriguez, the activist from Argentina, later told Agence France-Presse (AFP) that young activists were strongly in favor of efforts to divest from the fossil fuel industry, which was responsible for "pillaging" across Latin America.

He added that he welcomed the fact that the corporate sector had a heavy presence on the sidelines of the main UN climate summit this week, but that their efforts need to go beyond rhetoric and "they also need to be conscious that the greenwashing speech has no place anymore."

A landmark UN report to be unveiled next week will warn global warming and pollution are ravaging Earth's oceans and icy regions in ways that could unleash misery on a global scale.

But Guterres struck a more optimistic note on Saturday, crediting young activists with spurring action.

"This changing momentum was due to your initiative and to the courage, with which you have started these movements," he said. —WITH REPORTS FROM MADONNA T. VIROLA AND AFP INQ



# Environmentalists blockade oil refinery

**By Krixia Subingsubing**  
@krixiasINQ

BATANGAS CITY—"Sounding the alarm" for what is seen as the greatest crisis infringing on human rights, Greenpeace Philippines on Friday joined hands to form a human blockade in front of Pilipinas Shell Oil's refinery in Tabangao, Batangas, in a bid to emphasize corporations' outsized responsibility in curbing emissions causing global warming.

Around 6 a.m., six volunteers swiftly linked hands and

chained themselves to a large siren. Within seconds, they had barricaded the gate: a peaceful yet brazen challenge to fossil fuel companies like Shell to show accountability for their role in the climate crisis.

"It is big industries like Shell: those who have unlimited financial resources, technical knowledge and manpower, who can shift the discourse toward a safer future because they have the greater responsibility [on what caused climate change in the first place]," said 22-year-old

youth activist Krishna Arriola.

She added: "As we demand our right to a safe and livable future, we sound the alarm for fossil fuel industries because we only have 11 years left to limit the increase of our global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius. We should treat this as a national emergency."

### Landmark UN report

Greenpeace country director Lea Guerrero refers to the landmark report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change, which concluded that even half a degree beyond the 1.5 degree threshold could worsen the risks for extreme weather phenomena and widespread poverty for hundreds of millions.

The same report said that "urgent and unprecedented changes" are needed to hit the target.

At present, most countries like the Philippines won't likely meet the Paris agreement to keep temperatures between 1.5 to 2°C, Guerrero said.

A large part of this was because fossil fuel companies like

Shell had refused to acknowledge their role in the crisis, nor were they willing to participate in the climate talks, Guerrero said.

### Global climate strike

"Companies like Shell are not being asked by any government body to report on their own emissions even though they are the largest contributors to emissions leading to global warming," Guerrero said. "On the other end of it, the people who suffer the most are the people who are the least responsible for it."

So as the Philippines—one of the lowest carbon emitters in the world—joined the global climate strike, its primary call is climate justice.

This means proportionate action to protect the vulnerable, Guerrero said.

### Most vulnerable

Currently the Philippines ranks consistently among the top three countries most vulnerable to extreme weather and slow onset disasters spurred by climate change. INQ



05 23 19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

## Do rainwater harvesting – Dar

By Maria Romero

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is giving high priority on rainwater harvesting as a measure to address the water scarcity in the country.

This was bared by Agriculture Secretary William Dar, who said that the Philippines needs to utilize the abundant rainfall it receives yearly.

### The long-term measure is comprehensive land use at the provincial and municipal levels.

"We all know that we have abundant rainfall and if we will not impound that water, it would lead to other problems in the lowland areas," Dar said.

According to him, the Philippines annually receives about 2,400 millimeters (mm) of rainfall, one of the world's highest, however, we only harvest six percent of that rainfall.

"While India has only an

average of 700 mm of rain annually, they harvest 60 percent of that. They also lack water during the dry season. That is how important it is for them to harvest much of their rain," Dar explained.

He said that the provinces in the Philippines are encountering the same problem on water availability since according to studies, Benguet and some parts now of Cordillera have gone beyond the carrying capacity of the natural ecosystems due to human activities.

Dar added that while the government wants farming to succeed, it also needs to see to it that the carrying capacity of the ecosystem is observed.

Although the agriculture chief mentioned rainwater harvesting as a solution to water scarcity, he stressed that it is important to identify now the areas for agriculture and areas for re-vegetation or reforestation.

"The long-term measure is comprehensive land use at the provincial and municipal levels," said Dar, who mentioned that prior to becoming the agriculture secretary, rainwater harvesting has been his advocacy.



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

KAHIT kailan, hindi pina-kinggan ng mga oil company sa Pilipinas ang boses ng mga mamamayang Filipino na magiging patas sa kanilang pagpepresyo.

Lahat ng pagkakataon ay sinasamantala ng mga ito para kumita ng malaking tubo o limpak-limpak na salapi.

Lalong tuwang-tuwa ang mga ito kung may krisis sa langis dahil higit ang kanilang pagkakataon na magsamantala.

Lalo na sa Pilipinas na nakakadena ang gobyerno sa kainutilan sa mga kompanyang langis na mapagsamantala.

Bingi ang mga kompanyang langis sa reklamo ng mga mamamayan na sobra-sobra kung sila'y magsamantala sa lahat ng pagkakataon.

Basta ang naririnig lang nila ay ang boses ng demonyong "tubo" na laging nagsasabing "tubo pa more."

### **P1.75-P2.30 KADA LITRO**

Kahapon pa lang ay nagsimula nang maganunsyo ang mga kompanyang langis ng kanilang pagtataas ng presyo.

Halos lahat, Big 3 na binubuo ng Shell, Petron at Caltex o Chevron at mga small player, ay nagsabing naglalaro sa P1.75 para sa gaas, P1.80 para sa diesel at P2.30 para sa gasolina ang itataas ng presyo kada litro.

Rason nila: nagkakagulo kasi sa Saudi Arabia makaraang mabomba ang dalawang pinakamalaking pasilidad nila ng langis at nagbunga ito ng kalahating produksyon ng Saudi Arabia sa langis na may 5 porsyentong epekto sa pandaigdigang merkado.

Sa tantiya naman mismo ng Department of Energy, nasa P2.00 ang itataas ng presyo bawat litro ng mga produktong petrolyo.

At ito na nga ang nagsilabasan na anunsiyo ng mga kompanyang langis para sa susunod na linggo.

### **WALANG KATAPUSAN**

Magiging lang katapusan ang kalbaryo ng mga Filipino ukol sa sobrang pagsasamantala ng mga kompanyang langis, mga oil trader at bansang may hawak sa produksyon ng langis.

Pag sinabi nating mga kompanyang langis, sila itong mga pribado



## **SOLONS MAY P28B PORK BARREL; ANG SA LANGIS?**

Ang kompanya na hindi hawak ng gobyerno o ayaw magpahawak sa sinomang gobyerno gaya ng Shell, Chevron at iba pa na nakakalat sa buong daigdig at may sariling mga kutkutan ng langis sa pahintulot ng mga bansang may langis.

Ang mga bansang may kontrol dahil pag-aarini nila ang langis na nakakalkal sa sarili nilang makina o pribado nilang mga kompanya ay katulad ng America, Britantaya, Russia at mga bumubuo ng Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Mayroon ding mga negosyanteng middleman.

Ang lahat ng ito ang nagdidikta ng presyo ng langis sa buong daigdig at walang magawa ang mga katulad ng Pinas na halos 100 porsyentong nag-aangkat ng langis o bumibili sa kanila.

### **MATINDI SA PINAS**

Matindi ang nagaganap sa mahal kong Pinas dahil kinadena ng mga negosyante sa langis ang gobyerno para gumawa ng batas na pabor sa kanila.

Inudyukan o kinorap ng mga kompanya ng langis, kasama ang mga nagpapautang na dayuhan, ang mga mambabatas nating gumawa ng Oil Deregulation Law para malaya sila sa pagdidikta ng presyo ng mga produktong petrolyo.

Kasama na sa deregulasyon ang pagsasapribado ng noo'y pag-aari ng gobyerno na Petron upang walang magamit ang gobyerno na pangkompetensya sa kanila.

Nagkataon ding umutang ang Pilipinas noon sa mga dayuhan at ang deregulasyon ng langis ang isang kondisyon nila noon.

At the 'rest is history' ika nila.

Narito na ang kasaysayang maging ang gobyerno ay hindi na pupwedeng makialam sa presyo ng langis kahit pa ito ang pinakamalaking konsumidor ng mga produktong petrolyo.

Imadyinin na lang ang mga gamit ng mga ambulansya ng gobyerno, patrol car, service vehicle na sibilyan o pulis at militar, ta-

tayuan ka ng balahibo sa gastos.

Maging sa kuryente ay biktima rin dahil malaking bahagi ng paglikha ng kuryente ay galing sa diesel at gasolina na hawak din ng mga pribadong kompanya.

### **ANDIYAN LANG**

Napakayaman ang mahal kong Pinas.

Puno tayo ng mga minahan ng natural gas at langis.

Sa Sulu Sea, sa loob ng kalupaan sa Mindanao, sa karagatan ng Palawan at West Philippine Sea, sa Philippine Rise at may Philippine Deep na may pinakamalaking deposito ng sinasabing deuterium o heavy hydrogen.

Ang kulang na lang natin ay hindi pagkilos para kalkalin ang mga ito.

May mga ahensya tayo ng gobyerno na may kakayanan para magkalkal, magtesting, magsukat ng deposito at iba pa.

Pero walang nangyayari at ang matagumpay lang ngayon na isinulong pa ni Pang. Duterte ay ang oil drilling sa pagitan ng isang kompanyang Israel at ng Pilipinas.

Malaki ang salapi natin taon-taon.

'Yun bang === pambansang badyet.

Ngayon ay lumilitaw na may P28 bilyong pork barrel ang mga kongresman mula sa 2020 pambansang badyet.

Nasaan naman kaya ang pondo para sa pagtuklas at pagkalkal ng mga langis, natural gas at deuterium na nasa mga ilong lang natin upang hindi na tayo umasa pa sa mga dayuhan sa pangangailangan sa enerhiya?

Natuklasan na ang mga umaapoy na natural gas sa Philippine Rise at gamit na sa pagluto ng mga Pinoy sa Liguasan marsh ang natural gas, kailan kikiilos ang gobyerno ukol sa mga ito?

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