

DATE : 10-03-10

DAY : Thursday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

**Strategic Communication and Initiative Service**



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**Meat processing plant's operations halted due to foul odor**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has stopped the operations of a meat processing company in Batangas province, after it was found violating the terms of its environmental compliance certificate (ECC). The regional DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) slapped a cease-and-desist order, dated Sept. 26, on CDO Foodsphere Inc., which operates a 60,000-square-meter plant in Malvar town. The plant reportedly produces over 93,000 metric tons of processed meat products yearly. The order noted the "foul odor" that reportedly came from the plant's rendering area and its wastewater treatment facility. It noted that the pungent smell "causes environmental impacts and poses nuisance to public health and safety," thereby violating Condition No. 13 of the ECC. A notice of violation was earlier issued against CDO, which was tasked to conduct corrective measures to address the foul smell as early as October 2018. But the regional EMB continued to receive complaints about the plant whose wastewater discharge flows into Alulod River, and into Taal Lake. The company has 15 days from the receipt of the order to file a motion of consideration with the regional EMB. —JHESSET O. ENANO



## CDO Foodsphere freezes operations of two facilities in Malvar, Batangas

By Othel V. Campos

CDO Foodsphere Inc. said it temporarily suspended the operations of its wastewater treatment and rendering facilities in Malvar, Batangas after receiving an order from the Environment Department.

"In compliance with the DENR directive, we have temporarily suspended the operations of these two facilities while we are fast-tracking the improvements," the company said in a statement.

CDO-Foodsphere operates a 60,000-square-meter manufacturing plant in Malvar town that produces more than 93,000 metric tons of processed meat products a year.

The Environment Department said it found out several violations related to the Malvar plant's environmental compliance certificate.

CDO Foodsphere received a cease-and-desist order on Sept. 26 after the

Environmental Management Bureau in Region 4-A investigated reports of "foul odor" emanating from the waste treatment facility within the manufacturing site.

CDO Foodsphere assured the public that the products it manufactures were clean and safe. "We have always adhered to good and responsible manufacturing practices and standards and will continue to do so," it said.

The company said while it temporarily suspended the operations of its two facilities, "the rest of the plant remains to operate normally and ready to serve our customers."

"CDO Foodsphere Inc. has been a part of the lives of Filipinos for almost 45 years serving products that they can continuously trust. We strongly support the programs of our government and remain committed in keeping our environment clean and safe," it said.

With Rio N. Araja



## DENR stops operations of CDO Food Sphere Inc. in Batangas

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has issued a cease-and-desist order to CDO Foodsphere Inc. for failing to address the foul odor emanating from its manufacturing plant in Malvar, Batangas.

Such failure to address the problem, which started last year, is a violation of the company's environmental compliance certificate, regulators said.

The CDO dated September 26, 2019, was issued by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 4A against the company, which operates a 60,000-square meter manufacturing plant in Malvar town. The facility produces more than 93,000 metric tons of processed meat products a year.

The latest order was received by CDO Senior Vice President Arnold Alvarez. The company has 15 days from receipt to file a motion for reconsideration with the EMB-Calabarzon.

In stopping the operations of the CDO Malvar plant, the EMB-Calabarzon Regional Director Noemi Paranada cited the "foul odor" emanating from its rendering area and wastewater treatment facility, which "causes environmental impacts and poses nuisance to public health and safety." **Jonathan L. Mayuga**



## CDO's plant closed for ECC violations

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has stopped the operations of a manufacturing plant of meat processing giant CDO Foodsphere Inc. in Malvar, Batangas because of violation of the terms of its Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

In a statement on Wednesday, the DENR said CDO was issued with a cease-and-desist order dated Sept. 26, 2019 for irregularities in its rendering area and waste water treatment facility, which "causes environmental impacts and poses nuisance to public health and safety."

The CDO Malvar plant operates a 60,000-square meter manufacturing plant that produces more than 93,000 metric tons of processed meat products a year.

In an order signed by DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 4-A Director Noemi Paradana, the meat processing plant was found to have violated Presidential Decree 1586 or the "Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System" and DENR Administrative Order 2003-30, particularly Condition 13 of the ECC.

Under the condition, CDO agreed that when the implementation of its project causes adverse impacts to the environment or poses nuisance to public health and safety, it "shall immediately suspend its operation until such time that appropriate remedial measures are effected."

Prior to the cease-and-desist order, the DENR said a notice of violation was issued by the EMB and CDO was ordered to conduct corrective measures pertaining to the foul odor as early as October 2018, which the company failed to do.

In August this year, it said the EMB-Calabarzon received complaints from concerned citizens that the CDO plant continued to emit unpleasant smell during its operation in the afternoon until evening. The complaints were validated by a team sent by the EMB-Calabarzon to conduct an investigation in the area.

"Na-observe po talaga namin na meron pong unpleasant smell, foul odor na nanggagaling roon sa rendering area at doon sa anaerobic pond (We observed unpleasant smell, foul odor coming from rendering area and aerobic pond)," said Paradana who led the EMB investigating team.

"This is alarming considering that CDO produces food products," Paradana added, noting that the waste water discharge goes to Aluod River then to Taal Lake.

In October 2018, the official said the CDO was issued a notice of violation for non-compliance with several conditions stated in its ECC, including emission of foul odor.

An ECC is issued as a Certificate of Environmental Compliance Commitment to which the proponent conforms with, after the EMB explains the conditions.

**EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ**



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## **DENR stops operation of CDO Batangas plant over foul odor**

**By Joel dela Torre**

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has stopped the operations of meat processing giant CDO Foodsphere Inc. in Malvar, Batangas for environmental violation.

The Environment Management Bureau in Region 4-A issued a cease-and-desist order, citing the foul odor emanating from the plant's rendering area and wastewater treatment facility.

The DENR said the foul odor poses a threat to public health and safety and the environment.

CDO operates a 60,000-square meter manufacturing plant in Malvar town that produces more than 93,000 metric tons of processed meat products a year.

According to the DENR, the meat processing giant violated its environmental compliance certificate.

In an order signed by EMB-Calabarzon regional director Noemi Paradana, the CDO Malvar plant was found to have violated Presidential Decree 1586 or the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System and DENR Administrative Order 2003-30, particularly Condition No. 13 of the ECC.

Prior to the cease-and-desist order, a notice of violation was issued by the EMB to CDO.

The EMB ordered the company to conduct corrective measures pertaining to the foul odor as early as October 2018, which CDO failed to do.

Last August, the DENR received complaints that the CDO plant continued to emit unpleasant smell during its operation in the afternoon until night.

"Na-observe po talaga namin na meron pong unpleasant smell, foul odor na nanggagaling doon sa rendering area at doon sa anaerobic pond," said Paradana who led the EMB investigating team.



## DENR orders closure of meat plant

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the suspension of operations of a meat processing plant in Malvar, Batangas due to violation of the terms of its environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

A cease-and-desist order dated September 26, 2019 was issued by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Calabarzon (Region 4A) against CDO Foodsphere Inc., which operates a 60,000-square meter manufacturing plant in Malvar town.

The EMB-Calabarzon cited the "foul odor" emanating from CDO's rendering area and wastewater treatment facility, which "causes environmental impacts and poses nuisance to public health and safety."

In an order signed by EMB-Calabarzon Regional Director Noemi Paranada, CDO Malvar plant was found to have violated Presidential Decree 1586 or the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System and DENR Administrative Order 2003-30, particularly Condition No. 13 of the ECC.

An ECC is a certification that the proponent has committed to undertake full responsibility over the specified measure which is necessary to comply with existing environmental regulations and operate within best environmental practices that are not currently covered by other existing environmental laws.

Under Condition No. 13 of its ECC, CDO agreed that when the implementation of its project causes adverse impacts to the environment or poses nuisance to public health and safety, it "shall immediately suspend its operation until such time that appropriate remedial measures are effected."  
**(Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz)**



## Meat processing plant pinahinto ng DENR

**DAHIL** sa paglabag sa batas sa kalikasan, pansamantalang pinahinto ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang operasyon ng meat processing plant ng CDO Foodsphere, Inc. sa Malvar, Batangas.

Ayon sa DENR, Setyembre 26, 2019 nang ilabas ng DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Region 4-A ang cease-and-desist order para sa CDO na may 60,000-square meter manufacturing plant sa Malvar, Batangas na kayang mag-pro-

duce ng 93,000 metric tons ng processed meat products kada taon.

Umaksyon ang DENR sa sumbong ng mga mamamayan na may mabahong amoy na nagmumula sa "rendering area" at wastewater facility nito na nakaaapekto sa kapaligiran at maaaring makaperwisyo sa kalusugan ng publiko.

Ayon Regional Director Noemi Paradana, napatunayang lumabag ang kompanya sa Presidential Decree 1586 o Environmental Impact Statement System at DENR Administrative Order 2003-30, lalo na ang Condition 13 ng ECC.

Ang ECC o ang Environmental Compliance Certificate ay ipinagkakaloob sa isang proponent kapalit ng pagkakaroon ng responsibilidad sa pangangalaga sa kapaligiran at kalikasan na nakasaad sa environmental regulations.

Isang taon na umanong nabigyan ang kompanya ng notice of violation ngunit wala umano itong ginawa para ayusing ang problema na ang basura ay umaagos sa Alulod River hanggang sa Taal Lake.

May 15-araw ang kompanya na maghain ng motion for reconsideration.

**SANTI CELARIO**





**ENSURING PADDLERS' SAFETY**

# SUSPENSION OF DRAGON BOAT ACTIVITIES STAYS IN BORACAY

ILOILO CITY—The suspension of dragon boat activities in Boracay will be indefinite until the safety of the paddlers are assured, an official of a multiagency task force said on Tuesday.

According to Natividad Bernardino, general manager of the Boracay Interagency Rehabilitation Management Group, the directive of Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu issued last week will stay until the task force is "convinced that safety protocols are in place

and will be implemented."

Among these measures are the wearing of safety vests even during training sessions and requiring those steering dragon boats to undergo certification, she said.

### Protocol review

Cimatu ordered the suspension of dragon boat activities to allow the task force to review and improve safety protocols following the death of seven paddlers in an accident on Sept. 25.

The paddlers, all members of Boracay Dragon Force team, were preparing for a competition and were transferring to a training venue when their boat was hit by a squall and capsized. Fourteen others were rescued.

Support for the fatalities' families continued to pour in as residents and paddlers continued to mourn and offer tributes.

On Oct. 4, musicians and performers on Boracay Island will hold a "jamming session" at Bombom Bar to raise funds

for the victims' families. The event, set for noon to 12 a.m., is free but those attending are encouraged to donate for the families of the seven paddlers.

An online fundraising drive (through <https://www.gofundme.com/f/dragon-boat-team-tragedy>) raised \$6,525 (P339,205.39) as of Tuesday. A trust fund has been set up to receive donations which will be equally given to the families of the victims, most of them breadwinners.

—NESTOR P. BURGOS JR. INQ



## DENR distributes free patent titles

It is the result of intensified land titling services of the government which fast-track the processing and issuance of land titles to improve the standard of living and stimulate economic growth

**By Elmer Recuerdo**

TACLOBAN CITY — Over a thousand farmers in Eastern Visayas received agricultural free patents from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office under the Handog Titulo Program of the agency.

According to Maita Sugang, regional information officer of DENR-8, the distribution of the free patents is the result of intensified land titling services of the government which fast-track the processing and issuance of land titles to improve the standard of living and stimulate economic growth.

Unlike land distributed under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, agricultural lands issued with free patents can be traded, said Arturo Salazar, DENR Assistant Regional Director for Management Services.

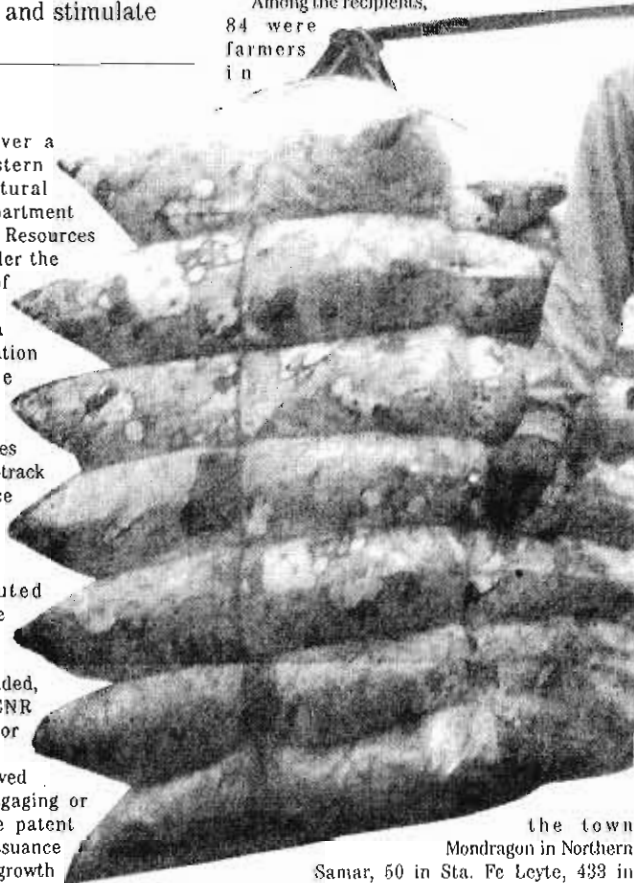
"Republic Act 11231 removed the prohibition from mortgaging or selling of land under free patent within five years from the issuance of the patent to encourage growth and progress in the agricultural sector," Salazar averred.

"You are now free to develop the potential value of your land. Make this productive to improve your living and bring economic development into your locality," he added.

DENR regional director Crizaldy Barcelo, who personally graced the distribution of free patents,

told the beneficiaries to carefully secure their respective titles because, according to him, ownership of a land with a certificate of title are the best legacies that parents could give their children.

Among the recipients, 84 were farmers in



the town Mondragon in Northern Samar, 50 in Sta. Fe Leyte, 433 in Calbayog City and over 500 farmers in Southern Leyte.

Handog Titulo is a nationwide activity conducted every September by all DENR Regional Offices and the Land Management Bureau as part of the celebration of the creation of the Bureau of Public Lands on 2 September 1901, which was mandated to administer public lands.



# Protectors of pine trees bark at the wrong tree

Nobody witnessed the actual infliction of the damage to the trees

By Aldwin Quitasol

BAGUIO CITY – The Office of the City Prosecutor junked a case filed by the City Environment and Natural resources Office (CENRO) against officials of a real estate developer for allegedly “poisoning” 45 pine trees here.

Officers of CENRO-Baguio filed charges against directors and officers of Gateluck Corporation last August – days after they found out that 45 Benguet pine trees were killed.

The CENRO-Baguio noted boring holes on the tree trunks and samples of soil solutions were found in the said holes.

The complainants alleged that the corporation had the “insidious plan” or “motive to kill” the trees to realize their development plan in the area.

According to CENRO-Baguio, the trees are found to be within the coverage of Proclamation 1754 or within the forest reservation area along Marcos Highway.

The office stated that the killing of the trees which, it said are “native plants,” is a violation of the National Integrated and Protected Area System (NIPAS).

The respondents, however, countered

and argued that the evidence against them was “bare, unsubstantiated, hearsay, speculative, conjectural and flawed.”

In a 13-page resolution, the Office of the City Prosecutor admitted that holes that had been bored in each of the 45 trees cannot be denied. It also acknowledged the presence of poisonous or toxic substances placed inside the holes.

However, the resolution stated that the person or persons liable for the offense under the Expanded NIPAS Law would be the person who had poached, killed, destroyed, disturbed any wildlife including in private lands within the protected area.

“The only question that is kept hanging is: Should any or all of the present respondents be made liable for this atrocious offense? Are the Benguet pine trees to be considered ‘wildlife’ within the terms of the section of the law they had allegedly violated?” stated the resolution.

The prosecution also stressed that at the expense of being repetitive, there is no direct evidence that could link the respondents to the commission of crime.

“Nobody witnessed the actual infliction of the damage to the trees,” the prosecution stated.



**Targeted** These Benguet pine trees are facing predators from irresponsible real state developers wanting to get rid of them to put up money-making structures.



## Birds of all species are for all of us to watch, appreciate—DENR exec

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

**A**N official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday urged the public to help protect migratory birds against unscrupulous individuals who see them either as pets or food.

"These birds are for [our] eyes to see and appreciate. They are not for food or pets," said Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, the concurrent director of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau.

Calderon has issued a public advisory announcing the annual bird migration season.

During the southward bird migration season, the Philippines is visited by thousands of migratory birds to escape the cold weather and take refuge in warmer regions.

The birds stop briefly to feed and rest in wetlands—swamps, marshes, intertidal and coastal areas, rivers, ponds, lakes, as well as forests throughout the country.

Hunting of wildlife is illegal and punishable under the provisions of Republic Act 9147, or the Philippine Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, or Wildlife Act, Calderon said.

The annual southward bird migration season begins in September and extends until February of the following year. During the period, the DENR and its partner conduct the annual bird count as part of a global effort to monitor

their population.

During the annual bird count, Calderon said, DENR partners—bird watchers and photographers—are also expected to document the number of birds and species that visited the Philippines.

"We are more excited to see critically endangered species, or new species of birds, being recorded or photographed," he said.

Calderon warned the public that hunting them for the illicit pet trade, or for food, is also "unsafe" as there is a possibility that the birds are carriers of diseases, like the dreaded avian influenza, or bird flu virus.

Transfer of the virus to domestic birds eventually can endanger the country's highly vulnerable poultry industry.

Migratory birds are also ecosystem indicators. These birds tend to stay only in areas where there is plenty of prey to feed on—insects which show that an area is ecologically healthy—and safe.

The Philippines is a signatory to the Bonn Convention, or the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Ramsar Convention, which aims to protect wetlands of international importance—feeding grounds of critically endangered migratory bird species.

The Philippines has several Ramsar sites, including the the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, a popular bird-watching site in Metro Manila that is threatened by proposed land-conversion projects in Manila Bay.



## METRO BRIEFS

### **BFAR: Marikina River negative for African Swine Fever**

The Marikina City government headed off another potential crisis on Wednesday as it announced that Marikina River was uncontaminated by 65 dead pigs that had been found floating in its waters since September. Water samples taken by the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) were negative for the African Swine Fever virus, it said, prompting Mayor Marcelino Teodoro to lift a fishing ban he had imposed in the wake of the bizarre incident. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, which tested the samples from the LLDA, informed Teodoro that fish from the river was safe for consumption even though pollutants in its waters had increased slightly due to "higher biochemical oxygen demand." The level of these pollutants—Staphylococcus aureus and E. coli—were still well below the regulatory limit of the Food and Drug Administration, Teodoro said. A third pollutant that BFAR had tested the samples for, salmonella, was absent. —MATTHEW REYSIO-CRUZ



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## METROLINE

### Marikina River fishing ban lifted

The Marikina City government yesterday lifted the fishing ban in Marikina River after it was found free of the African swine fever (ASF) virus.

Mayor Marcelino Teodoro made the announcement after the Laguna Lake Development Authority said the river tested negative for ASF even if 65 pig carcasses were thrown in the waterway since Sept. 12.

"I lifted the fish ban based on the report conducted by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). Fishermen and residents are now allowed to fish and swim in the river," he said in a statement.

Around 300 fishermen are expected to benefit from Te-

odoro's order.

The BFAR said fish in Marikina River are safe to eat and pollutants in the waterway are still within the regulatory limit of the Food and Drug Administration. — Emmanuel Tupas

— Ghio Ong



# Marikina River free of ASF virus, fishes safe for human consumption, mayor says

BY CLAUDETH MOCON-CIRIACO | *Correspondent*

**M**ARIKINA City Mayor Marcelino Teodoro on Wednesday declared that Marikina River is free from the African swine fever (ASF) virus and that the fishes are safe to eat.

“Based on the ASF virus analysis of the Laguna Lake Development Authority [LLDA], Marikina River tested negative for ASF,” the mayor said.

There were a total of 65 pig carcasses retrieved from the Marikina River since last month. The carcasses

started to surface on September 12.

Teodoro said that they were wondering why there were dead pigs floating in the river, saying there’s no piggery or slaughter house along the river bank.

The mayor said that their hard work paid off in retrieving the car-

casses of the pigs “that’s why the level of contamination is not so much.”

“We were able to remove 65 carcasses from the river,” he added.

The LLDA took water samples from three stations, namely, Circulo Verde in Pasig; boundary of Jesus de la Peña and Santa Elena; and Bayabas Street in Barangay Nangka.

The clinical laboratory report submitted to the local government of Marikina was signed by LLDA General Manager Jaime Medina.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) told Teodoro that the fishes in the city’s river are safe to eat.

The report of BFAR showed that pollutants in Marikina River increased but not to the point that it went beyond the regula-

tory limit of the Food and Drug Administration.

The BFAR test showed that there is no longer presence of salmonella, staphylococcus aureus and E.coli.

Teodoro also informed around 300 fishermen about the good news.

“I lifted the fish ban based on the report conducted by BFAR. *Iyon ang naging* [That was my] basis...to lift the fishing ban. Fishermen and residents are now allowed to fish and swim in the river,” the mayor said.

The probe seeking to find where the pig carcasses came from is still ongoing.

Teodoro assured that people behind the dumping of pig carcasses in Marikina River will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.



## MODERNIZATION MAY STOP SCARE

# Marikina River ASF-free

By Maria Romero and Neil Alcober

Negros Oriental 3rd District Rep. Arnolfo Teves Jr. yesterday pushed for the modernization of the Bureau of Customs (BoC) and even sought necessary funding to ward off the entry into the country of smuggled meat and meat products infected with African swine fever (ASF).

At a hearing of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food on the implications of ASF on the local swine industry, Teves specifically sought a "No X-ray, No Entry" policy.

"The Department of Agriculture (DA) has been saying that imported meat products are the carriers of ASF that reached the country. As such, why can't we agree to have a modernized process in the BoC? That way, we can easily identify which imported products are safe," the congressman said during the hearing.

"I have been campaigning this for a long time now and I don't know why can't we do that?" he added.

DA Undersecretary Ariel Cayanan said ASF was suspected to have reached the country through imported meat products from high-risk countries and perpetuated by swill feeding.

Cayanan said the dumping of dead hogs in waterways also helped spread the dreaded disease.

On Tuesday, Agriculture Secretary William Dar already threatened legal action against hog traders ignoring strict animal quarantine rules after it was confirmed that another site in Metro Manila was hit by the disease.

Meanwhile, Marikina Mayor Marcelino Teodoro yesterday declared the Marikina River safe for fishing again.

Teodoro made the announcement following findings issued by the Bureau of Fisheries, which verified that fishes caught in the river are safe for human consumption and are uncontaminated

by the recent incidence of African swine fever (ASF).

A total of 65 pig carcasses had been retrieved from the Marikina River in the past weeks, with the first hogs surfacing on 12 September. This occurred, despite Marikina having no piggery or slaughterhouse.

"Based on the ASF virus analysis of the Laguna Lake Development Authority, Marikina River tested negative for ASF," Teodoro said.

**Tests revealed fish from the river are below the allowable limit for common bacteria, such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella*.**

The Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) took water samples from three stations namely, Circulo Verde in Pasig; at the boundary of Jesus de la Peña and Sta. Elena; and Bayabas Street in Barangay Nangka.

The clinical laboratory report given to the local government was signed by LLDA general manager Jaime Medina.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) told Mayor Teodoro that the fishes in the city's river are safe to eat.

The BFAR report showed that the level of pollutants in Marikina River rose, but not to the point that it went beyond the regulatory limit set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The BFAR tested the samples for the following: *Staphylococcus aureus*, *E. coli*, and *Salmonella*.

Due to this, the mayor met with around 300 Marikina River fishermen to tell them the good news – the lifting of the fishing ban.

"I lifted the fish ban based on the report conducted by BFAR. That served as the basis for my lifting the fishing ban. Fishermen and residents are now allowed to fish and swim in the river," he said.

However, the probe to determine where the pig carcasses came from is still ongoing.





# Manila Water warns customers of higher water rates if SC maintains its Aug ruling

BY JOEL R. SAN JUAN  
@jrsanjuan1573

**M**ANILA Water has asked the Supreme Court to reverse its August decision directing the company along with water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services to pay a fine amounting to almost P2 billion for violation of the provisions of Republic Act (RA) 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

In a 55-page motion for reconsideration, Manila Water through lawyer Alejandro Alfonso Navarro said the Court may also consider remanding or referring to the Court of Appeals or the Office of the Secretary of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) or any appropriate government agency the case for a determination of factual issues, their liabilities and correct fines to be imposed.

The company argued that contrary to the findings of the Court, the petitioner complied with the provisions of Section 8 of the Clear Water Act (CWA).

In August, the SC affirmed the Court of Appeals' ruling which found the Metropolitan Waterworks and

Sewerage System (MWSS), Maynilad and Manila Water liable for violation of Section 8 of the Philippine Clean Water Act.

The provision requires MWSS and the two concessionaires to provide wastewater treatment facilities and to connect sewage lines in all establishments, including households, to an available sewerage system within five years upon the effectivity of RA 9275 on March 6, 2004.

However, Manila Water insisted that under Section 8 of the Clean Water Act, its obligation is simply to connect sewage lines existing at the time of the effectivity of the law to then-available sewerage systems within five years from the law's effectivity on March 6, 2004.

The petitioner said the SC decision interprets Section 8 of the Clean Water Act to mean that it must unconditionally comply with all its obligations under the concession agreement within five years from the law's effectivity.

"In other words, the Decision folded-in the 40-year period for petitioner Manila Water to comply with its obligations under the concession agreement

to a mere five years, when the said period under Section 8 of the Clean Water Act was only intended for the interconnection of sewage lines to sewerage systems existing and available in 2004," it noted.

The Manila Water pointed out that even Congress recognizes the "immensity" of the task to provide complete and centralized sewerage system under the Clean Water Act, by mandating not one but several government agencies to implement its provisions, namely, the DENR, Department of Public Works and Highways, and various local government units.

"Therefore, the only reasonable conclusion is that petitioner Manila Water, as a private entity, cannot be required to assume obligations beyond those set forth in its concession agreement. To require petitioner Manila Water do so will not only violate the principles of non-impairment of contracts but will also undeniably constitute arbitrary exercise of police power, contrary to the established tenets of due process," the water concessionaire said.

The Manila Water also warned that the accelerated establishment of a complete centralized sewerage system is expected to cause huge an increase in water prices by P26.70 per cubic meter or a 780.18-percent increase in current water rates.

"This exponential increase in water prices will eat into the already meager savings of the average Filipino household in Metro Manila [which stands at P6,333.34 per 2015 survey of the Philippine Statistics Authority]. The situation paints an even dire picture if one is to consider the hefty fuel price hikes of recent days, the inflation which is projected to lie somewhere between 0.6 to 1.4 percent for September..." the company noted.

It told the Court that as of December 31, 2018, Manila Water has reportedly spent a total of P38.5 billion for wastewater projects, higher than the P36.9 billion collected in sewer charges.

Under its concession agreement, the Manila Water said it is allowed to recover operating, capital maintenance and investment expenditures efficiently and prudently incurred from its customers.



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**NAGPAPALIWANAG** si DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu habang hinihingan siya ng detalye ni Senator Cythia Villar tungkol sa 2020 budget ng DENR sa hearing sa Senado. (MANNY MARCELO)



## Pasig River

SINCE Rajah Sulayman's rule before the Spanish colonizers arrived in our land in the 16th century, the Pasig River was already a lively and bustling waterway — a source of aquatic wealth, commerce, and cultural influences. This contributed to the success of Manila as a center of trade. Even though the Pasig River was only 27 kilometers long, it was of great importance, most especially to the communities living near it, because it linked the principal port in Manila Bay to Laguna de Bay — the largest freshwater lake in the country, allowing foreign ships from China, Burma, Sumatra, India and Japan to reach them. The area was so prosperous that Spanish conquistadors conquered Manila for it. Because of its strategic location, the Pasig River was viable for intra-island transport via its *esteros* and tributaries. The *esteros* of the Pasig River provided a link to the provinces of Bulacan and Pampanga; the cities of Las Piñas, Parañaque, Marikina, Montalban, Taguig and Antipolo; and the municipalities of Pateros and Cainta. Before the automobile dominated our highways, the Pasig River was the city's most significant channel of transportation. The river basin includes Manila, Pasay, Makati, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Taguig, Marikina, Caloocan and Quezon City.

Sadly, it has become one of the most polluted rivers in the world caused by excessive untreated wastewater dumped from residential and industrial sources and lack of solid waste collection. In fact, in the 1990s, ecologists declared the Pasig River as biologically dead and unable to sustain marine life. Even its major tributaries — the Marikina, San Juan and Taguig rivers — are also heavily polluted.



**FELINO A. PALAFOX, JR.**

Famous rivers like the Thames in London, the Hudson in New York, and the Rhine that passes through Switzerland, Germany, France and the Netherlands, are inspiring examples of how cities and countries were able to reverse the once seemingly hopeless state of their major waterways. In the 1950s and onwards, all three rivers experienced extreme environmental degradation as they became the primary waste disposal sites for sewage, chemical waste and heavy metals of the households and factories surrounding them. The contamination was so bad that nothing was able to survive in the waters, and the rivers gave off a foul smell. Sounds familiar, right? But the cities affected were able to successfully revive these rivers through increased environmental awareness, campaigns and strict law enforcement and industry regulation by the government. Now, wildlife has been increasing in the rivers, and people can now enjoy recreational activities like kayaking and even swimming. The cleanup took time and required extraordinary efforts, but these produced success stories that residents can be proud of.

Since the 1990s, we at Palafox had the chance to work with notable individuals such as former first lady Ming Ramos, former Budget secretary Benjamin Diokno, former Environment secretary Lito Atienza and the late Gina Lopez, who was an ardent environmentalist. We envision a paradigm shift from the poor treatment of a precious resource to its elevation into a source of national pride. Our recommendations are centered on environmental protection, social equity, urban renewal and transit-oriented development.

Environmental management is an utmost priority. Only after reducing the pollution load can the other programs and initiatives be implemented. According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 85 percent of households and commercial and industrial establishments are not connected to sewer lines. This means effluents coming from these structures go directly to bodies of water, including the Pasig River. Just imagine the volume of waste from the clusters of informal settlers living along the river and the hundreds of factories situated near it. In addition, solid waste disposed into the river has been a perennial problem. Installing thousands of sewer lines to intercept domestic and industrial wastewater, rehabilitating the Manila Central Sewerage System, and establishing septage and water treatment plants are highly recommended. By relocating informal settlers through socialized housing developments, the river can reclaim the once wide riverbanks and watercourse, and there will be less polluting material and substances thrown into the river.

The river is envisioned to stitch the historical, cultural and commercial districts by establishing a vibrant corridor with vernacular architectural styles, valued heritage structures and opportunities for adaptive reuse. Mixed-use developments along the Pasig



River would act as a catalyst for urban renewal. These can be complemented with an open space network. Architectural and cultural heritage sites near the river like Binondo, Quiapo and Intramuros can be infused with educational linear parks that can add to the sense of history by using elements that reflect the wealth of detail found in those areas. Areas vacated by industries can be transformed into prime mixed-use centers, and more economically varied groups of people must be served by future development to avoid pockets of exclusivity. Moreover, the open space network must also feature inviting waterfront esplanades, urban agricultural parks for community-based cultivation and propagation of vegetable crops, environmental protection areas and commercial parks. As a result, what was once back-of-the-house "basurahan" can be converted into the front door of development.

Once the river is cleaned up, the Pasig River can also serve as a faster transport alternative to EDSA and can improve the east-west connectivity within and outside the metropolis. The ferry system can be upgraded, and well-placed transit-oriented developments like ferry stations must be supported by better road connections and walkable and bikable bridges. Augmenting the transport system can help decongest traffic, speed up travel time, lessen delays, and revive the historic role of the Pasig River as a major transportation route.

The rehabilitation of the Pasig River continues to be a herculean challenge that requires equally immense cooperation, discipline, capital and political will. Environmental consciousness from both the private and public sectors must be revived if we hope to restore the former glory of this very important urban waterway.



STRATEGIC  
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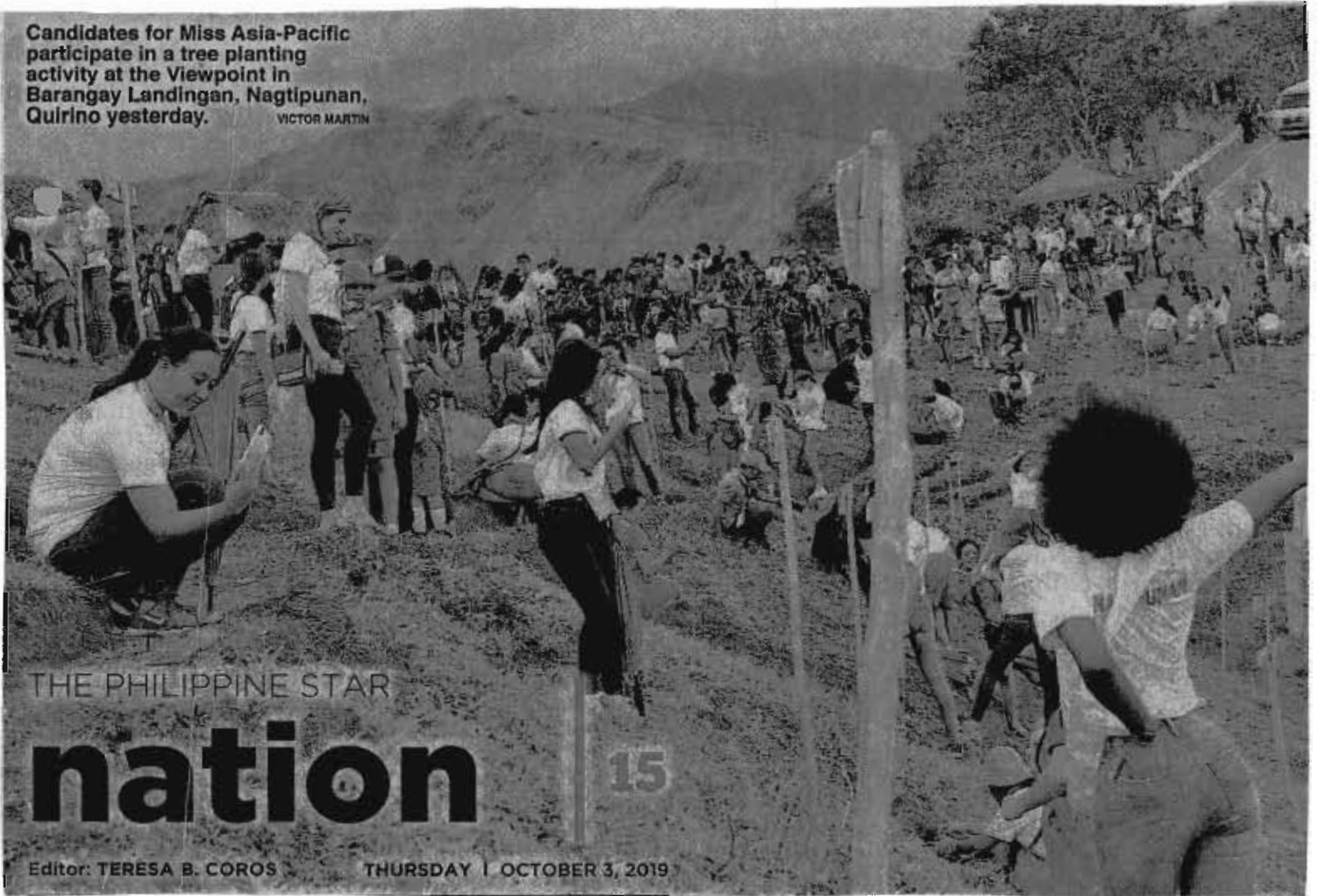
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Candidates for Miss Asia-Pacific participate in a tree planting activity at the Viewpoint in Barangay Landingan, Nagtipunan, Quirino yesterday.

VICTOR MARTIN



THE PHILIPPINE STAR

**nation**

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Editor: TERESA B. COROS

THURSDAY | OCTOBER 3, 2019



STRATEGIC  
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# COLIFORM BACTERIA SA DAVAO RIVER TUMITINDI

**TUMINDI na ang level sa dami ng namamayaning coliform bacteria sa bahagi ng Davao River.**

Ito ang napag-alaman kay Davao councilor Mary Joselle Villafuerte na kung saan ay umakyat na ang level nito sa 920,000 ang bilang ng micro-organism per 100 milliliter na coliform sa buwan ng Setyembre ni-

tong taon. Ang nasabing datos ay mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) na nagpapakita na ang nasabing bilang ng bacteria ay hindi na ligtas lalo na kung aksidenteng maiinom ang tubig.

Nabatid na ito rin ang rason na hindi pinahintulutan ang mga

isasagawang swimming competitions at iba pang recreational activities sa Davao River.

Nauna nang inihain ni Villafuerte ang "Zero Open Defecation" ordi-

nance sa lungsod kung saan mandato ito sa lahat ng mga bahay na gumamit ng banyo na may septic tank at kailangan na i-practice ang tamang pagtapon ng dumi.

Matatandaang nagpositibo rin ang Davao river sa polio virus base sa resulta ng isinagawang eksaminasyon.

**BENEDICT ABAYGAR, JR.**



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**HEALTH HAZARD** Hindi alintana ng mga trabahador ang posibleng makuhang sakit sa hinahakot na basura sa business district ng Davao City, kahapon.

**KEITH BACONGCO**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

# HATAW!

**D'YARYO NG BAYAN**  
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## Gabundok na basura sa center isle ng Rizal Ave.

GRABE ang gabundok na basurang nakatambak sa mismong center isle ng Rizal Avenue sa Sta. Cruz, Maynila.

Ang mga lugar o kalsadang makikitaan ng tambak ng basura ay mula sa S. Herrera, Yuseco, Batangas, Laguna at New Antipolo bago dumating sa Blumentritt station ng LRT. Mayroon din ganitong pangitain sa Tambunting, Obrero at Abad Santos LRT.

Sa mga kalsadang nabanggit, pinakamasahol ang lugar ng Batangas, Laguna, at New Antipolo na umaabot hanggang haligi o poste ng LRT sa kadahilanang puno ng basura ang center island.

Tinataon ng mga residente rito ang pagtatapon ng kanilang basura mula 8:00 pm - onwards hanggang kunin ng trak ng basura sa umaga, 'e paano kung hindi ito makuha, e 'di namaho ang kapaligiran. Malaki rin ang tsansang pagmulan ito ng kung ano-anong sakit at karamdaman, 'di po ba?

Kung minsan ay talagang may mga residente at mamamayan tayong likas na pasaway, walang disiplina at walang galang sa kanilang kapuwa. Iyan ang mga makasarili.



## YANIG

BONG RAMOS

Sila ang nagiging problema ng pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila sa pamumuno ng ating butihing Mayor Isko Moreno.

Ano man ang ganda ng kanyang programa at layunin upang maging malinis, maluwag at maging progresibo ang lungsod, nasisira ito at nawawala sa ayos dahil sa mga pasaway sa halip na tumulong ay nakaabala pa.

Malakas rin ang loob at makakapal ang mukhang gumawa ng kapalpakan, mantakin ninyong sa gitna pa ng kalye nagtatapon ng kanilang mga basura samantala puwede naman sa lid-gi lid-gi o sa mas tagong lugar.

Sa lahat ng barangay sa buong Maynila, ito ang may sariling oras ng pagtatapon ng kanilang basura, maliban sa kanila ay sumusunod lahat sa patakaran na kailangan munang nandiyan na mismo ang trak ng basura bago maglabas at magtapon.

Sampolan mo nga Yor-me para hindi na pamarisan ng iba.

Kung ayaw ninyong tumulong sa paglilinis ng komunidad, ok fine pero huwag na lang kayong mag-kalat at malaking tulong na iyon.





## FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

### Mindset

In the last analysis, the real reason for the decade-long delay in issuing the go-ahead for constructing the Bulacan airport was a certain bureaucratic mindset suspicious of yielding control over strategic projects to the private sector.



With the signing of the 50-year concession agreement, that stultifying mindset appears to be receding. That is promising. After all, the infrastructure backlog we accumulated is due to government's traditional insistence that it alone should undertake the strategic projects our economy needs.

We have seen the benefits of privatization in many areas. Had government not privatized the North and South expressways, these vital road systems would have remained in the decrepit condition they were in the last years of government control. Had government not privatized the water concessions, Metro Manila would have remained waterless. Had government not opened the door to private investments, SCTEX and TIPLEX would not have been built.

Mega Manila would have been even more congested than it is now.

We knew for years that we needed a large and modern airport. But, for too long, bureaucratic mindset got in the way.

To be sure, San Miguel Corp. made government an offer very difficult to resist. The entire P735 billion airport will be built by the conglomerate at no cost to government. No government guarantee was required for financing the project. The proponent will even spend for all right-of-way acquisitions. SMC had already acquired the 2,500 hectares of land for the gateway. The corporation will build the rail line and elevated roads to the facility.

To top it all, SMC will give government 200 hectares for free. Government agencies could be moved out of the crowded city and relocated to an area with superior accessibility.

The construction of the new airport, to start before this year ends, will bring life to what had literally become a backwater area. The land San Miguel acquired was flooded most of the year. The salt beds and fishponds were made useless by severe pollution in the bay.

Among the first things San Miguel will do is to bring in Dutch consultants to design solutions to the flooding. The mangrove areas will be rehabilitated.

The backwater will become a hub of economic activity. Regional air services will use the new airport to bring in more flights to the city. It will be a center for aircraft maintenance and logistics services.

All the flurry of business activity this will generate will help sustain our economic expansion for decades.

### Weir

If government can entrust something as complicated and highly technical as a regional air hub to a private company, why can't it trust private investors to build what is needed to supply the metropolitan area with sufficient fresh water supplies?

When water distribution in the metropolitan area was privatized, the agreement envisioned that bulk water supplies would also be undertaken by the private sector. Instead, the old bureaucratic mindset crept in. Government agencies decided the way to go in: building new raw water facilities was for government to borrow money and award construction to a company preferred by the lender.

And so it was that the New Centennial Water Supply Project, fixated on building a dam at the Kaliwa River that will submerge areas inhabited by indigenous people, would be funded by ODA. We sourced the loan from China and then awarded the project to China Energy Engineering Company.

Not all is well with this project, however.

The COA recently issued an Audit Observation memorandum that raised red flags on the bidding process. It appears the two losing bidders were involved merely to satisfy the requirements of the Procurement Act. Therefore, no real competitive bidding happened.

Even worse, the COA finds that the project was awarded even if the winning bidder lacked sufficient documents required. This was, in the COA's view a negotiated procurement thinly disguised as a competitive bidding.

The COA findings could prove fatal to this bulk water supply project the metropolitan area so direly needs. It might not be too late, however, to reimagine the project and rethink the engineering and financing approaches to getting it done.

As early as 2009, the Osaka-based Global Utility Development Corp. (GUDC) proposed a \$410-million weir project on a 25-year build-operate-transfer scheme. This could be built much more quickly than a full-scale dam without having to resort to borrowing.

The proposed Kaliwa Intake Weir will be just 7 meters high with a 16-kilometer tunnel that can deliver 550 million liters a day. That is enough to supply the city's foreseeable needs. The tunnel will be 3.3 meter high and can be built very quickly.

It is never too late to drastically rethink this project. After all, the plan to build a large dam on Kaliwa River has not yet been granted an environmental compliance certificate. The local government of Infanta, Quezon is determined to block the dam – given the massive loss of cropland, rangeland and forest cover that the dam design will cause.

Contrary to the MWSS' claims, the approvals given by the Quezon provincial government and by the Calabarzon regional development council are not sufficient. The Local Government Code requires the approval of the local government legislative council for projects that inflict substantial environmental costs.

And then there are the issues related to loss of ancestral domain. The design for a full-scale dam puts indigenous communities at risk of being submerged or being cut off.

It might do well for our officials to go back to the drawing board given the issues raised.



# Challenge to students: Study climate change

**F**rom Sept. 20 to 27, students all over the world walked out of class for the Global Climate Strike. We did it for our lives, we did it for our future, boycotting school in the face of an impending climate disaster. But as the strikes wind down for now, I have a strange piece of advice for fellow young strikers: Go study.

Climate change is complex. The crisis we face involves multiple layers of interwoven issues. If, for example, we want to address CO<sub>2</sub> building up in the atmosphere, we also have to find out the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> actually present in the air, which countries and corporations emitted the CO<sub>2</sub>, and at whose expense. All these issues and more are tied together, and being a good activist means being able to unravel them and see where they connect.

Of the different threads to be followed, science provides the clearest start. Understanding climate change requires understanding basic concepts, like global warming and greenhouse gases, and mastering these issues requires the lessons taught by basic biology, physics and chemistry. The first people to recognize climate change were scientists who had the training and bravery to read the data and warn us of the implications of the patterns coming out.

However, science by itself isn't enough. Humans caused climate change, and so are part of the equation, too. Which organizations, corporations and institutions began to dig up and burn fossil fuels for energy and money, and continue to do so today? Who runs them? Do the rest of us have any say?

On July 1, 2016, Gloria Capitan was shot

## COMMENTARY

RIO CONSTANTINO



**WHICH ORGANIZATIONS, CORPORATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS BEGAN TO DIG UP AND BURN FOSSIL FUELS FOR ENERGY AND MONEY, AND CONTINUE TO DO SO TODAY? WHO RUNS THEM? DO THE REST OF US HAVE ANY SAY?**

dead in her village. She was a 57-year-old grandmother who spearheaded the Coal-Free Bataan Movement, leading her community in protest against the expansion of local coal plants. For that, she was killed. Since then, the Philippines has become the deadliest country in the world for environmental defenders. Where has justice gone?

If there's one thing to be sure of, it's that the threat posed by climate change affects everyone, everywhere, especially people al-

ready living on the margins. And as the world focuses on brave, intelligent Greta Thunberg, it risks forgetting about other voices that are just as vital. The indigenous youth, whose communities are among those most in danger of climate change, and who are fighting for their lives in the face of it—what insights do they have to share? Shouldn't they have a greater say in this crisis?

A big reason why getting organized is so important is that it's not just an additive process. It's multiplicative. Climate change is maddeningly complex. No one person could go at it alone, which is why we join together. Scientists pool their knowledge with community organizers and human rights defenders, while also seeking the help of artists to share their findings in new and powerful ways. Being an activist for climate change doesn't mean just showing up. It's also about joining the movement while bearing some skill or idea of your own to contribute to the collective effort.

The climate strike in September won't be the last. As governments around the world fall short of addressing the climate crisis, it's our young voices that will force them to sit up and listen. And as strikers continue to organize their own actions both locally and internationally, students should remember: Don't be afraid to get out of your classes, grab your placards and go study.

Rio Constantino is a second-year biology major at the University of the Philippines and a volunteer of the environmental organization 350.org Pilipinas.



## ECONsciousness

# A solution to climate emergency?

**C**onserve biodiversity. Yes, as simple as that. But this is not a simple solution as it needs the collective human push to make it happen.

"Climate change is not an issue separate from biodiversity loss, as one inevitably affects the other. For instance, the destruction, degradation, and loss of forests over the past decades have dramatically increased the amount carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thereby amplifying the greenhouse gas effect," said a statement from Haribon Foundation.

The issue of climate change was once again at the forefront. With millions of people across the planet joining the global Climate Strike to the call of emergency made by one person (16-year-old Greta Thunberg), there is no more time to waste to address climate change

especially in the season of increased global temperatures and heat waves.

The Foundation further noted that a significant amount of carbon is conserved in natural forests (up to 250 MgC/ha) and can be emitted to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide gas through deforestation.

"Illegal, uncontrolled use, and blasting of marine habitats such as mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs have also resulted in the massive decline of fish catch and degraded ecosystem services. These benefits from ecosystems include carbon sequestration or the ability to absorb and store carbon dioxide, and protection from floods and storm

surges," said Haribon.

In other words, efforts towards climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the protection and conservation of biodiversity must be looked at interdependently.

The inter-governmental panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) fifth assessment report states that "conserving natural terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems and restoring degraded ecosystems (including their genetic and species diversity) is essential for the overall goals of both the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)."

Since 2017, the Philippines has committed to the Paris Agreement in aiming to increase the ability of countries to respond to the impacts of climate change, and to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) since 1993 with the goal to conserve biological diversity, promote sustainable use of biodiversity components, and equitable sharing of benefits from using its resources.

Ecosystem services from biodiversity are key to eliminating greenhouse gases and protecting communities from disastrous climate change impacts such as flashfloods and fatal storm surges.

Moreover, engineering innovative

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and renewable sources of human subsistence will also help sustain ecosystems and biodiversity for future generations.

"Despite existing policies and localization efforts, the country must expedite effective implementation of concrete environmental solutions to meet the bar. Our commitments in international agreements demand double the time for our institutions to operationalize and fund conservation programs," said the Foundation.

"We are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction," said Thunberg.

Indeed, it is true. The ecosystems and biodiversity are vulnerable to climate change, making efforts to conserve and protect the environment and everything that lives in it more relevant than ever.

# Time to act on climate change, Phl tells UN

By JANVIC MATEO

**UNITED NATIONS – The Philippines is not backing down in its call for countries to act on climate change even as it sent a “lean” delegation to the historic Climate Action Summit held here in New York last week.**

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr., speaking before the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday (early Sunday in Manila), stressed the need for countries to start acting on climate change, noting that the Philippines is among those hard hit.

“Climate change – or as (UN) Secretary General (António) Guterres calls it, the climate crisis – is the defining development issue of our time,” he said.

“Climate change has brought my country – already one of the most vulnerable countries to disasters – extreme weather events of increasing recurrence and strength,” he added.

Describing the phenomenon as the “reverse of God,” Locsin said disaster wipes out socio-economic gains and reverses economic growth built with great sacrifice.

“If climate action does not mea-

sure up to what is needed, we all face the same fate: a diminished existence then extinction altogether. But the most to blame will suffer less; and only much later than those who are the least at fault,” he said.

“We already have the global frameworks to address poverty, sustain development, and combat climate change. So, let’s just do it. To borrow from Kung Fu Panda, ‘Enough talk, let’s fight.’ The Secretary General urges us to actually plant trees than plan some more to plant them. I think he’s fed up,” he added.

The foreign affairs chief stressed the need for climate action for the present and future generation.

“For God’s sake, they’re already screaming at us. They see what’s there and we refuse; none so blind, indeed,” he said, referring to the youth who have organized a global climate strike participated by millions around the world.

## Lean delegation

Locsin made the statement on climate change even as the country took the backseat in the summit convened by Guterres last Sept. 23.

The country was not among those that delivered commitments on climate action, which included proposals to reduce carbon emissions to slow down global warming and strengthen mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Climate Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman said he was not able to attend the summit due to “pressing domestic concerns,” particularly budget deliberations in Congress.

Nevertheless, he said the Philippines had a “lean delegation” composed of representatives from the Philippine Permanent Mission in New York, National Economic and Development Authority and the Climate Change Commission.

Even United States President Donald Trump, a climate change skeptic, briefly dropped by the summit while he was at the UN headquarters to attend a separate event on religious freedom.

De Guzman, in his statement fol-

lowing the summit, congratulated Guterres and the country co-chairs of the priority action tracks for successfully organizing the event.

“We welcome the collaboration among governments, private sector, civil society and the youth to produce a balanced and diverse set of committed actions for achieving the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement,” he said.

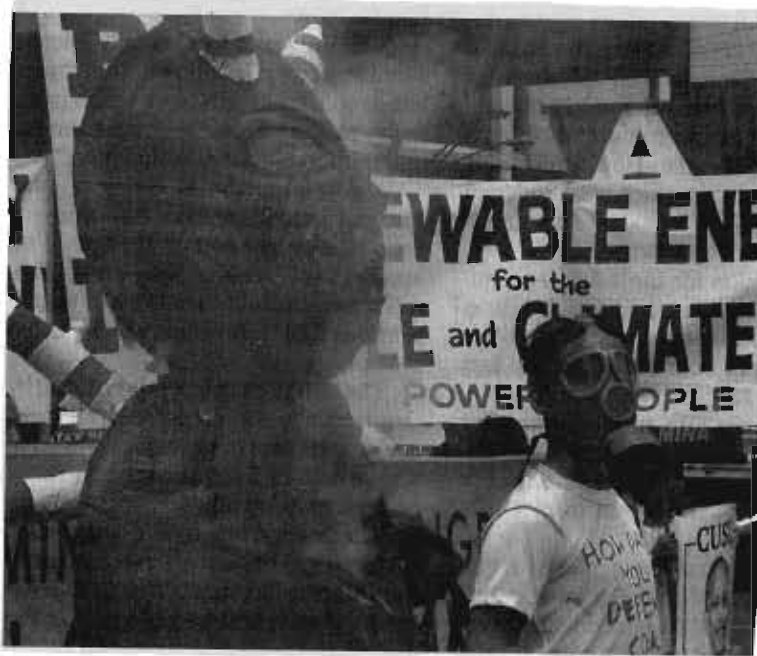
“We trust that the committed actions will uphold the time-honored principles of the Convention — the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and the precautionary principle,” he added.

The climate body chief also expressed hope that developed countries would deliver promptly on their financing commitment under the Paris Agreement for the climate actions of developing countries such as the Philippines.

“Finally, we laud the youth across the globe for manifesting its collective resolve to participate in the process of finding and implementing transformative climate solutions and in calling on world leaders to respond decisively to the climate emergency with climate justice,” he added.



# Pinoy environmentalists call for action vs. coal



**Eco groups stage a protest marking a self-declared National Day of Action Against Coal**

In line with global advocacy efforts surrounding the recent landmark United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York, environmental groups in the Philippines launched similar initiatives aimed in particular against continued dependence on fossil fuels in the country's energy mix.

The Power for People Coalition (P4P) declared last Sept. 24 as National Day of Action Against Coal, the first commemoration of its kind marked by a protest march along Mendiola Street in front of Malacañang Palace together with simultaneous rallies in La Union, Quezon, Palawan, Negros Occidental, Davao City, and other areas

across the country.

Environmentalists, religious groups, and residents of communities affected by coal-fired power plant operations along with other concerned citizens and stakeholders comprised the rally, demanding a moratorium on new coal power plants as well as the full implementation of the Renewable Energy Law.

"The directive of the President to reduce coal reliance and fast-track renewable energy development is clear. We are here to demand a follow through from the administration," said Ian Rivera of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, one of the member groups of P4P.

"Based on the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, we have less than 11 years to avert catastrophic

climate change. We can do that by eliminating coal and most advanced countries in the world have done so. But the Philippines is increasing its use of coal-fired power plants against all logic," said Gerry Arances, lead convener of P4P.

According to P4P, the Philippines' energy sustainability ranking has slipped from 70th to 94th, and its environmental sustainability ranking skidded from first to 68th, based on the latest World Energy Council (WEC) Trilemma Index.

"We are one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change. We cannot let the current state of affairs continue and expect that we would still have a country to call home in the future. Only direct and decisive action today will prevent certain catastrophe tomorrow," said Arances.



# IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

**'It is time that the Philippine business community take the challenge of sustainability seriously.'**

In addition to proactive environmental conservation and disaster resiliency efforts, a faith-based environmental group at this year's State of Nature Assessment or "Green SONA" in Puerto Princesa is urging Filipinos to address the problem of climate change through wiser financial and investment decisions.

Living Laudato Si is the latest movement that joins increasing efforts of various non-profit and socio-civic groups to mitigate climate risk in the Philippines. It is a response to the landmark 2015 encyclical issued by Pope Francis, "Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home" that outlines concrete steps the Catholic and Christian faithful can take amid a world besieged by challenges of climate change.

According to the group's lead convenor, environmentalist and 2018 The Outstanding Young Men and Women of the Philippines (TOYM) awardee Rodne Galicha, Filipinos may not realize that they have the "power of the purse" when it comes to contributing to pro-environmental efforts.

"While actions such as avoiding single-use plastics, proper waste management, and other individual measures we take as ordinary Filipinos are very important, an efficient and impactful manner by which we can achieve permanent positive change for the environment is through sustainable enterprise," he explained.

Globally, companies and businesses are increasingly being called upon to create value for shareholders while ensuring positive impact on the environment.

"Investors and stakeholders in Philippine enterprises have the right to call for sustainable business practices," said Galicha. "This means making sure that our money is not used for coal-fed power plants, mining, and other environmentally destructive businesses."

Conversely, Filipinos are urged to support "green" businesses and companies that have clear commitments to sustainable operations.

"It is time that the Philippine business community take the challenge of sustainability seriously," stressed Galicha in a panel discussion on renewable energy at the 2019 Green SONA organized by Green Convergence Philippines, Forest Foundation Philippines, and supported by Energy Development Corporation.



## Time says Manila under threat; 500 scientists reject 'climate emergency'

First word  
SERIAL  
development-



OBSERVER

YEN  
MAKABENTA

the climate front impel me to turn again to climate change in my column today in order to assess their implications. >ObserverA6

## Time says

First, *Time* magazine online has listed Manila as one of six regions/cities that face the gravest risks from the climate crisis.

Second, 500 scientists, engineers and professionals have sent the United Nations secretary-general a declaration, saying, "There is no climate emergency."

Third, a research study has uncovered 50 years of failed doomsday predictions.

### Countries/cities most under threat

In its report last week, *Time* wrote:

"Climate change is expected to affect every country in the world, but its impact will not be felt equally across all regions and some will be worse hit than others because of a range of different threats.

"Developing countries, places with widespread poverty, and countries with ineffective governments sometimes face the gravest risks from the changing climate, and are usually poorly equipped to find ways to prepare for and prevent environmental threats.

"Measuring the future impact of climate change is very challenging, because scientists' climate change projections cannot be completely exact and because there are many different factors that come into play.... There are other non-climatic factors that also determine how severely a city or country will be impacted by climate change. Niall Smith, who analyzes the regions' climate change vulnerability for the global risk consulting firm Maplecroft, tells *Time* that it's also necessary to weigh in what's happening politically and socially in a region to figure out if the country can prepare.

"The places with the least level of economic development are certainly in line to feel the impacts with the greatest degree, partially just due to their geographic fate — or their location — but more so based on the socio-economic and governance factors," says Smith.

"To get a sense of the challenges different regions are facing, *Time* spoke to experts about six countries and cities that will be particularly affected by climate change."

The six countries and cities, according to *Time* are:

1. Lagos, Nigeria — "Lagos is at 'extreme' risk on Maplecroft's Climate Change Vulnerability Index. This is especially concerning because its popu-

lation is expanding rapidly, and it is considered to be a major economic engine for the region."

2. Haiti — "Climate change can be a 'threat multiplier,' says Christina Chan, the director of the World Resources Institute's climate resilience practice. This is especially true for Haiti. The island nation is located in the 'Atlantic Hurricane Basin,' which means that it is vulnerable to hurricanes. In comparison to other projections on climate change, scientists are less certain about the link between climate change and hurricane frequency and intensity...."

3. Yemen — "Countries with weak institutions and governments are likely to find it especially difficult to adapt to climate change, says Smith. Since civil war broke out in Yemen in 2015, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed directly as a result of the conflict, but also due to the subsequent famine, poor sanitation and a lack of clean water."

Both war and climate change will make water shortages and famine more likely.

3. Manila, Philippines — "The Philippines faces a high risk of natural disasters, including earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and especially hurricanes. Manila, which is located along the coast, is also densely populated, which makes it more difficult to evacuate, requires more social services and makes it more challenging to rebuild after a disaster...."

"However, Chan says that the Philippines is in fact on the 'forefront of adaptation' to climate change, and have designated part of their budget to making their country's agricultural sector and infrastructure more resilient, and preparing to respond to future disasters."

4. Kiribati — "Kiribati-Tarawa's single paved road has collapsed because of the flooding from the sea. The people of Kiribati are under pressure to relocate due to sea level rise. Each year, the sea level rises by about half an inch. Though this may not sound like much, it is a big deal considering the islands are only a few feet above sea level...."

"Rising sea levels mean that Kiribati may be wiped off the map entirely in the coming decades. The islands have even purchased 5,000 acres of land in Fiji in case they need to relocate."

5. United Arab Emirates — "[T]he United Arab Emirates is facing many risks due to its location. Like Yemen and other neighboring states, the UAE is facing an 'extreme risk' of water stress, according to Smith, and will need to spend a lot

more energy on cooling.

"Unlike many other countries facing these threats, however, the UAE is wealthier and is able to make sophisticated investments to blunt the impact of climate change. For instance, the UAE is working to produce its own fresh water, build temperature-controlled spaces, investments in green energy, and developing crops that can withstand hotter temperatures."

### No climate emergency

In an article published on September 29, the *Washington Times* reported that at the Global Climate Summit convened on September 23 by the UN, 500 international scientists, engineers and other stakeholders issued a declaration, saying: "There is no climate emergency."

The European Climate Declaration, spearheaded by the Amsterdam-based Climate Intelligence Foundation (Clintel), described the leading climate models as "unfit" and urged UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to pursue a climate policy based on "sound science."

"Current climate policies pointlessly and grievously undermine the economic system, putting lives at risk in countries denied access to affordable, reliable electrical energy," said the September 23 letter signed by professionals from 23 countries.

Most of the signers hailed from Europe, but there were also scientists from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South America.

Fig. 2 Time says Manila under threat; 500 scientists reject 'climate emergency'

"We urge you to follow a climate policy based on sound science, realistic economics and genuine concern for those harmed by costly but unnecessary attempts at mitigation," the letter said.

The signers urged the world body to organize a meeting of scientists "on both sides of the climate debate early in 2020."

The sheer number of prominent signers of the declaration, with scientific and engineering credentials, belied the alarmists' contention that only a handful of fringe researchers and fossil-fuel shills oppose the climate-catastrophe "consensus."

The US contingent was made up of 45 US professors, engineers and scientists, including MIT professor emeritus Richard Lindzen, Freeman Dyson of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton, and Stanford University professor emeritus Elliott D. Bloom, as well as several signers formerly affiliated with NASA.

### Six-point declaration

The declaration made six points:

1. Nature as well as anthropogenic factors cause warming.
2. Warming is far slower than predicted.
3. Climate policy relies on inadequate models.
4. Carbon dioxide is "plant food, the basis of all life on Earth."
5. Global warming has not increased natural disasters.
6. "Climate policy must respect scientific and economic realities."

Convincing climate-focused institutions like the UN to engage on such topics has been a struggle, said Guus Berkhout, professor emeritus of geophysics at Delft University of Technology and a Clintel co-founder.

Professor Berkhout said of the initiative: "We promote a scientific discussion at the highest level between both sides of the climate debate, but the mainstream refuses so far... They always come with the same arguments: they are right and we are wrong. Period!"

Indeed, the UN is moving full speed ahead on carbon neutrality, with policymakers, researchers and media outlets calling for increasingly urgent measures to combat the "climate crisis" and "climate emergency."

In their letter, the Clintel network called it "cruel as well as imprudent to advocate the squandering of trillions of dollars on the basis of results from such immature models..."

"The science is far from settled."

### 50 years of failed predictions

The Cooperative Enterprise Institute, a libertarian think tank based in Washington D.C., has compiled a list of failed climate predictions, which it titled "50 Years of Failed Eco-pocalyptic Predictions."

John Nolte, writing in the Breitbart, was especially crushing. He wrote on September 20:

"For more than 50 years climate alarmists in the scientific community and environmental movement have not gotten even one prediction correct, but they do have a perfect record of getting 41 predictions wrong.

"In other words, on at least 41 occasions, these so-called experts have predicted some terrible environmental catastrophe was imminent... and it never happened.

And not once — not even once! — have these alarmists had one of their predictions come true."

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# Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: Championing social justice and democracy

Since 1964, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Philippines, alongside stakeholders, brings the voice of social justice and democracy through dialogue and international cooperation.

The pressing issue on climate change and the fact that the Philippines is the world's fifth most climate-vulnerable country offer an opportunity to talk about social justice in the country. One particular area that FES Philippines took as an area it

can address is the Philippines' electricity production which, because of its huge dependence on burning imported coal, is neither economically nor environmentally sustainable.

There is a dearth of renewable energy



Sen. Win Gatchalian on an information visit to Rheinsberg Nuclear Power Plant currently being decommissioned as part of Germany's energy shift. Photo by Renee Tumalluan/FES Philippines



One of the activities of REBOOT (Renewable Energy Boot Camp) is an immersion in sites where micro-grid structures are located. This one is taken in Aurora. Photo by FES Philippines

experts with the technical, business, and political skills to build a sustainable and adequate energy supply. This is precisely the objective of the Renewable Energy Boot Camp, a training programme supported by FES, which finished its second batch of advocates training just last July 2019.

FES also works with current decision-makers to inform energy policy and practices. FES supported a visit by Philippine legislators in 2017 to Germany, including the Chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, to explore how the nuclear option may perhaps not have all the security and cost benefits that they had been hoping for.

The hopes for a democratic and just transition are not only a package of social justice, but also an answer to the call to deepen democracy. The work on democracy will never be whole without the front and center topic on trade unionism.

This year, the foundation is piloting a study on gender justice in the well-talked about topic on The Future of Work among unions in the Philippines, in partnership with the Labor Education and Research Network (LEARN) and the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations (UP SOLAIR).

An outlook on how gender gap in trade unionism and in the workplace can be exacerbated or improved by the digitalisation and automation of industries in the Philippines is something worth looking at as we value the perennial role of democracy in development.

For more information about the work by FES in the Philippines, visit the official website: [www.fes-philippines.org](http://www.fes-philippines.org) and follow their Facebook fan page (FES Philippines) on Facebook



# Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Promoting climate justice in the Philippines

**T**he Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) celebrates its first year in the Philippines with a renewed vigor to work on issues related to climate justice in the region. In 2016, the RLS was granted funds by the German government to launch a climate justice program in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Following its robust start last year, the RLS Climate Program continues to

work on “energy democracy” and “false solutions to climate change” with its local and international partners through capacity building trainings, academic research, and gatherings that promote democratic participation. In its work, the RLS aims to study and promote solutions to climate change that are initiated by communities, local organizations and inspired by think tanks and academia grounded on the principles of climate

justice.

The specific work task of the climate justice program is the interconnectedness of climate justice matters in the Philippines and Indonesia with the discussions on climate action in Europe and on the international level.

The RLS launched its key activity for the year last September, Beyond Borders, Beyond Labels — a global solidarity conference that sought

to unite voices from the scientific community, civil society, and policymaking field to amplify calls for the recognition of the rights of climate-induced migrants in a deeply divided political landscape.

The RLS has also begun its Red Rosa Talks, a series of lectures and discussions tackling pertinent issues in the climate change movement. It concluded its first installment on Just

Transition last July and will continue the lecture series on questions of the metabolism of nature and capital.

With a solid grounding on climate justice, the RLS Manila shall be expanding to a regional office to cover the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia in 2020. The office will be working on a broader set of topics that aims to promote civic education and democratic participation.

THE MANILA TIMES PHILIPPINE MODEL CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

# Environment protection key to building better landscapes for next generation

BY EDWIN P. SALLAN  
PHOTOS BY RENE DILAN AND GERARD SEGUIA

**E**NVIRONMENT protection, climate change and disaster preparedness were the most recurring concerns raised by most of the speakers at this year's edition of "The Manila Times Philippine Model Cities and Municipalities" which was anchored on the theme, **Building Better Landscapes for the Next Generation**.

The event which took place at **New World Manila Bay Hotel, Malate Manila, on September 25** aimed to focus on the local government units' respective comprehensive development plan for the next three years. In assessing this year's model towns and cities, emphasis was

given on social development, economic growth and yes, environmental protection.

## Environment protection

"We are at a time when disasters, both natural and man-made, are happening in almost every part of the globe. So, we have to take environment protection seriously, especially in community or city plan-



■ Senator Cynthia Villar

ning. That by itself is doing the future generation a favor," noted **keynote speaker Sen. Cynthia Villar**.

For Villar, who chairs the Senate Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change Committee, **progress need not come at the expense of the environment** as she called on local government units to give greater emphasis on environmental protection.

"So, of all the criteria and considerations we have included in the search for model city or municipality — social development, economic growth and environmental protection — we need to put greater emphasis on the latter. Social development and economic growth should not be at the expense of environmental protection," Villar argued.

For her part, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Undersecretary Adoracion Navarro stressed the need for comprehensive land use policy can lead to better landscapes for the next generation.

"In general, the effect of improper land use planning and management is uncoordinated and unsustainable use of the country's land, which is manifested by urban sprawl or uncontrolled development that encroaches on agricultural land, thereby endangering our food security, and also encroaches on other fragile areas," Navarro mused.

For this reason, Navarro is hoping for the passage of the National

► Environment protection **F2**

Land Use Act (NaLUA), which seeks to harmonize sector-specific land use policies and institutionalize land use planning. "We need a NaLUA in the Philippines in order to curtail the adverse effects of the improper land use planning and management," she said.

## Green architecture

Celebrated architect and urban planner Felino Palafox, Jr. offered a similar view as Villar's as he advocates for "green architecture" or projects that create buildings that not only have minimal impact on human health and the environment but are also appealing to tourists. As a matter of fact, he said masterplans in Siargao and Corregidor have already included green architecture.

"Many tourists now, especially the younger ones, prefer environment-friendly, green sustainable tourism, buildings and facilities," Palafox pointed out.

Noting that architects should go beyond designing structures and should include caring for the environment, Palafox said his firm, Palafox Associates, has always pushed for sustainable tourism as part of their advocacy in building structure designs.

These should also include roads which should allow more space for pedestrians without their own vehicles.

"[There should be] one-third for people, pedestrians and bicycles. One-third for trees and landscaping. And one-third for moving traffic lanes or vehicles. It takes about 10 trees to recover the oxygen out of the carbon monoxide per car," he further noted.

Angeline Tham, chief executive officer of popular ride-hailing and

delivery service app, Angkas, agrees and added that "people don't realize how [traffic] congestion affects our society in a more profound way. It affects our choices, it affects our freedom, it affects our mental health."

Recognizing Angkas' focus on "safe and professional" rides has prompted Congress and the Department of Transportation to allow Angkas to operate.

"[This is] an example of a private sector and a government can provide a joint solution to some of our traffic loads," Tham underscored.

## Climate change and disaster preparedness

Still on the subject of environment protection, Manila Times columnist Ludwig Federigan said that "the imperative for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort to fight and build community resilience against climate change has never been more pronounced than ever."

Citing alarming data from 2019 Global Climate Risk Index by Germanwatch and Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Federigan noted "drastic changes in weather patterns, increase in frequency, intensity and duration of floods, and droughts in the face of climate change."

"Sea level rise in the country is projected to be at 60 centimeters (cm) or three times the global average of 19 cm, with about 60 percent of our local government units at risk of storm surges, flash floods and saltwater intrusion," Federigan further warned.

Hence, the need to anchor model cities on disaster preparedness, according to Leyte Fourth District Representative Lucy Torres-Gomez.

Torres-Gomez said the challenge is how to make cities sustainable,

THE: Environment protection key to bldg better landscapes PAGE 1/ 2/2

given that they occupy only three percent of the earth's land, yet more than half of the world's population prefer to live here.

"Our model cities and municipalities must be developed with renewable energy as main component, which is the best way to avoid dumping carbon emission into the atmosphere," she said, mentioning that Ormoc City, under the leadership of her husband, Richard Gomez, is the second largest producer of geothermal energy in the world.

Torres-Gomez concluded that economic progress was possible amid natural disasters and human-induced challenges, like the Marawi siege and the unfortunate Resorts World fire as the Philippines was able to maintain a high gross domestic product despite global fluctuations and the calamities Filipinos face year after year, season after season the past 10 years.

### Social development and economic growth

In terms of social development and economic growth, Lobien Realty Group Inc. chief executive officer Sheila Lobien is happy to report that the Philippine real estate industry "will continue to grow" outside Metro Manila, citing the progress made in Pampanga, Cebu and Davao.

Lobien said Clark, Pampanga, in particular, looks attractive to business process outsourcing offices and multinational firms with its lower rental rates. Cebu, on the other hand, is "home to the biggest master-planned developments in the Visayas," with "numerous options for office, commercial and residential needs" while "Davao should be able to increase its GRDP (gross regional domestic product), as infrastructure projects start to kick in in that region."

Even with all these encouraging developments, the ease of doing business in the Philippines still has "a long way to go" according to Eleanor Roque, head of the tax advisory and compliance division of P&A Grant Thornton, a leading professional services firm.

"It takes a much longer time — usually a month — in the country to process the documents required to start a business, compared to only one day in Singapore. These documents include barangay (village) clearance, community tax certificate and business permit," Roque noted.

Citing these and other related concerns, the P&A official said LGUs should "streamline the steps for registering," in accordance with Republic Act 11032, or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018. (With reports by Javier J. Ismael, Anna Leah E. Gonzales, Franz Lewin Embudo, Tyrone Jasper C. Piad, Ludwig O. Federigan and Arlo Custodio)





# PUNONG PUNO NA AKO



# PAWIKANA BABE?

## It's more fun to promote sustainability

The Department of Tourism (DOT) voiced out 'Ayoko sa plastic' through a set of online stickers that promote sustainable tourism.

'Ayoko sa plastic' is one of its online stickers that can be downloaded and used on Viber and Instagram accounts to promote responsible and sustainable tourism

messages to friends and loved ones.

With most Filipinos online, DOT took advantage of the situation to boost awareness using everyday expressions, and puns, partnered with stylized illustrations, that discuss environmentalism with a twist.

Lines like 'Pawikana babe,' 'Punong-

puno na ako,' 'Leaf it alone,' and 'Fish be with you' as well as everyday Filipino expressions like 'ingat' and 'apir,' are only a few of the things that are featured. The sticker pack also features animal species in the country, including the iconic Philippine eagle, the tarsier, and more.





## China celebrates 70 years

There was no parade of new armory or sleek, shiny weapons and neither was there a massive display of military tanks just as China did in central Beijing on Tuesday.

But China's 70th anniversary celebration in the Philippines was no doubt grand and pompous, too. Makati Shangri-la's Rizal Ballroom glittered with bright red flags and at least for a night, guests were treated to rich Chinese culture and cuisine. The intensity was almost tangible — Xi Jinping's books were free for the taking and the naturally soft Chinese classical music — played on small ensembles — filled the air.

### EYES WIDE OPEN



**IRIS GONZALES**

Security was tighter than in the previous years in the strictly by-invitation only event as VIPs lined up to pay their courtesies to Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua who stood out among the crowd because of his signature fuchsia Tang suit.

Some of the country's top tycoons, diplomats, and government officials graced the event.

#### The world stage

Over the course of 70 years, China is now on the world stage from a position of isolation, Amb. Zhao said in his speech.

"The number of countries that have diplomatic relations with China has increased from 18 to 179," he said.

He also trumpeted China's modern day Silk Road, the Belt and Road initiative.

"China has signed agreements on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) cooperation with 136 countries and 30 international organizations," the Chinese envoy notes.

#### China and the Philippines

Touching on the relationship between Manila and Beijing, Amb. Zhao says the partnership remains strong.

"China and the Philippines are good neighbors, sincere

friends and trusted partners. Under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and President Duterte, China-Philippine relations have moved forward steadily and have delivered tangible outcomes."

On the controversial sea dispute, the ambassador insists that China is committed to sharing the benefits of development with the Philippines.

"It is our belief that South China Sea issue is not the sum total of China-Philippine relations, nor disputes, the sum total of South China Sea issue. We would also like to make concerted efforts with the Philippines to promote substantial progress of the joint exploration of oil and gas."

Furthermore, he said, China would continue to support the Philippines as country coordinator of China-ASEAN dialogue relations.

"And it is our hope that during the Philippines' tenure, Code of Conduct (COC) consultations could be concluded with the aim of turning South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and prosperity," he said.

Amb. Zhao is right. The relationship between the two countries has moved forward under the Duterte administration.

It is now a waiting game to see how much, in the end, our country and our people would really benefit from our improved ties with one of the world's superpowers.

### Trash talk

Speaking of our relationship with other countries, the Duterte administration is right in insisting before the government of Canada that the Philippines is not a dumping ground for its trash.

However, players in the recycling industry lament that the issue has put recycling in a bad light.

In a recent interview, Crispian Lao, head of Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability said the controversy surrounding Canada waste has put recycling in a bad light.

"While recyclables were part of the shipment, they are highly contaminated. On the other hand, it shows that government policies, though imperfect, work. (But) there should be a better way of properly defining and classifying materials as recyclables versus

waste and there is a need to set standards," Lao says.

#### Moratorium on waste importation

Recycling industry players support government efforts to keep the Philippines as sustainable and environmentally safe as possible. However, the recycling industry is hoping the government would be cautious in coming out with policies in the future as drastic measures may significantly affect the recycling industry.

Lao agrees. He said disallowing imports of recyclable plastic may affect some sectors.

It is no secret that in the Philippines, there are many industries that need recyclable plastics and waste such as cement for instance.

#### An important industry

"Recycling is a key industry in the Philippines and there is room to grow. The informal sector or waste pickers benefit from this and the industry generates employment from this," Lao said.

#### Waste management

He also says recycling is key to waste management. Aside from reducing waste, recycling is also an integral part because it gives materials a second chance.

"Following the hierarchy of waste management, Avoidance (REDUCE) is top of the list and the aim is to minimize waste generation. Then comes REUSE to allow the maximum use of our limited resources. Next is RECYCLE to give the materials a second chance," Lao says.

He said these three Rs are key components of waste management, together with treatment and final disposal which are still lacking in the Philippines.

#### Drastic change needed

In the end, the key is to really reduce each one's waste.

All of us — from businessmen to ordinary citizens — need a drastic change in lifestyle and mindset to really make a difference in reducing waste and also in putting our waste into good use.

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LANDSCAPE

# Police power and tourism



By **GEMMA CRUZ ARANETA**

**L**AST year, 129 million tourists came to Southeast Asia and left \$329.5 billion, 12 percent of the region's GDP according to the World Travel & Tourism Council. Those figures are expected to increase in the next five years. The mighty tourism wave will continue to crest as barriers to the industry disappear. However, there are already alarming signs that tourism is reaching unsustainable levels.

A case in point is Boracay our world-famous destination, coveted for its powdery white sand that remains cool under a blazing tropical sun. Boracay is a victim of its own success. The island is only 7 kilometres long, barely a kilometer wide at its narrowest waist. With a total area of 10.32 square kilometers, there are at least 500 hotels there, not to mention bars, restaurants, and retail shops. It has a resident population of 38,000 which includes its original inhabitants, the Atis.

In 1990, over one million tourists visited Boracay and last year when total tourism arrivals peaked at 6.6 million, 2 million went to Boracay, which is incredible, considering that there are more than 7,000 islands to choose from in the Philippine archipelago.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the World Tourism Council, if Boracay's real carrying capacity is to be respected, it should receive only 19,215 tourists and the number of permanent residents should not exceed 35,730. There is already an excess of 17,000 who must be relocated to Aklan, as soon as possible.

We were all appalled when President Rodrigo Duterte called Boracay a cesspool (that man does not mince words!) Apparently, he saw a video that had gone viral, showing disgusting sewage flowing directly into Boracay's blue waters and heaps of rubbish generated on Boracay more than three times higher than in the Manila, the country's congested capital.

You can imagine how furious the President must have been when inspectors reported more than 800 environmental violations. He took local authorities to task for their negligence and dispatched an emergency government taskforce to save the island from ecological catastrophe. With urgency, he signed Proclamation No. 475 that declared a state of calamity in the island of Boracay and ordered its closure for six months. The Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Tourism, and Local Government were commanded to clean up the

island.

Significantly enough, there are existing laws, rules and regulations protecting wetlands, forests, indigenous communities, and natural landscapes on Boracay Island and most of our beach resorts. There are regulations about carrying capacity, easements, drainage systems, and non-obstruction of streams, brooks, and other natural waterways. But obviously, local government officials and private sector investors had purposefully violated these laws for the sake of expediency, or just plain greed.

There were protests by people whose livelihood were affected by the closure; cases were filed, and some reached the Supreme Court. But the President showed his mailed fist and sent the Armed Forces to guard all entry points of Boracay. The island held a soft opening in October, 2018, but Secretary of Tourism Berna Puyat said the cleaning-up must continue as the back streets of Boracay were still messy.

It may interest you to know that in the Supreme Court en banc decision two justices dissented because they believed that the President's decision to close Boracay Island for six months "leads to the realization of tyranny, the very evil against which the Constitution had been crafted to guard against..." However, most



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justices affirmed that President Duterte's Proclamation No. 475 is a valid police power measure.

Sustainability was not a buzz word until recently. The "3 pillars of sustainable tourism" used to be somewhat obscure: Environmental concerns, socio-cultural and heritage issues were given lip service; Congressmen could not quite connect tourism with economics, they were more interested in body count than revenues. Tourism was merely a source of funding for their street lighting projects, basketball courts, and town fiestas. But that is slowly changing.

From my perch as Secretary of Tourism, I began to see the obstacles to tourism sustainability in the Philippine context which might have been like that of other Southeast Asian nations. At the political level, the Department of Tourism, from its creation in 1973, was primarily a policymaking, planning, programming, and coordinating entity, dependent on the Executive Branch. It was disconnected from the government institutions it needed most, to wit, the Civil Aeronautics Board, Philippine Ports Authority, Departments of Education, Public Works and Highways, Health, Foreign Affairs, Environment, and Transportation.

The issue of "Open Skies" was both political and economic, and it was taboo. Inspired by the case of Bali, where tourism boomed under "open skies," I said Philippine tourism needed "open skies", during a first interview as secretary of tourism. After all, 98 percent of those who come to the Philippines travel by air. But, Philippine Airlines

{PAL} which was no longer a flag carrier, was vehemently against the 5th freedom. Its owner accused me of nothing less than treason. But that was 20 years ago; even PAL must go with the flow.

Last year I felt sort of vindicated because, at the 32nd ASEAN Summit in Singapore, connectivity dominated the agenda as the ten member countries expressed commitment to a "seamless ASEAN Sky." ASEAN was adopting an "open skies" policy and it is now enlarging the air market so ASEAN-based airlines can operate freely in this region of more than 600 million inhabitants.

In 2009, President Gloria Arroyo signed Republic Act 9593, the Tourism Act, the Department of Tourism became the primary planning, programming, coordinating, implementing, and regulatory government agency in the development and promotion of the tourism industry, both domestic and international, and in coordination with attached agencies and other government instrumentalities. The department is also mandated to instil in Filipinos the fundamental importance of the industry in the generation of employment, investments and foreign exchange.

However, ten years after that Tourism Act gave more teeth to the Department of Tourism, today's sitting President had to nick the Constitution and use his police powers to restore sustainability in just one island, Boracay. So, that begs the question -- do we need police power to assure tourism sustainability?

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MAGANDANG pag-isi-pan ng Department of Education at mga mambabatas ang panukala ng National Youth Commission para mabawasan ang pagbubuntis ng mga dalagitang estudyante at pagkakaroon ng sakit sa human immunodeficiency virus-acquired immunodeficiency syndrome ng mga binatilyo at dalagita

Sabi ni NTC Chairperson Ryan Enriquez, makatutulong nang malaki ang paghiwalay ng mga babae at lalaking estudyante ng mga classroom.

Ang sasaklawin umano ng paghiwalay ay ang mga nasa Grades 7 hanggang 12.

'Yun bang === nasa first year high school hanggang sa senior high school.

#### PALIWANAG

Ayon sa NYC, kung maghiwalay umano ang babae at lalaki, maliwasan umano nang malaki ang sobrang pagdidikit ng mga nagliligawan o magboboypren nang estudyante.

Kung hiwalay umano ang mga ito at hiwalay rin ang grupong paggawa ng mga assignment na ginagawa sa mga bahay-bahay na may mga overtime at overnight pa, mababawasan nang malaki ang mga tukso tungo sa pagkakaroon ng kontak na sekswal.

Batay sa karanasan mismo na naire-rekord at naiulat din ng paha-yagang ito, may mga nabubuntis na estudyante dahil lamang sa paggawa ng mga overtime at overnight sa mga assignment na ginagawa kahit saan, sa loob at labas ng mga eskwelahan.

Ang pagboboypren sa maraming pagkakataon ay nagsisimula sa mga first year high school at may mga ser-yoso na makaraan ang ilang panahon.

At lalong naging ser-yoso ang mga relasyon kung nakarating na ang mga estudyante sa mga huling bahagi ng junior high school at buong senior high school naman.

#### NAKABABAHALA

Batay sa rekord, may 196,000 nabubuntis na kabataang nasa edad 15 hanggang 19 na tug-



## HIWALAY NA LALAKI, BABAE LABAN SA TEEN PREGNANCY

ma sa Grades 7-12.

Marahil ay kasama na rin dito ang mga out-of-school youth.

Nagdoble rin umano ang nagkakasakit ng HIV mula sa 17 porsyento para mga nasa edad 15 hanggang 24 anyos.

Nitong Hunyo, may 1,006 kasong HIV at 52 porsyento rito ang tumama sa mga may edad na 25-34 habang 29% naman ang tumama sa mga may edad 15-24.

Kung maghiwalay umano ang lalaki at babae at masabayan ito ng mga pag-aaral ukol sa HIV-AIDS, malaki ang ibabawas ng teen pregnancy at pagkakaroon ng nasabing mga sakit.

#### KAINITAN

Sabi ng ating Uzi, kainitan nga ng mga kabataan sa nasabing mga edad ang maghanap ng mga ka-weeksary, monthsary at iba pa.

At lalong mainit umano ang interes ng mga ito sa sex dahil na rin sa malayang internet na pupwedeng pagpanooran ng lahat ng sinehan, kasama ang mga porno na pelikula.

Ito'y bukod sa natural na tunguhin ng mga kabataan, partikular sa parte ng mga kababaihan, na magsimula sa mga araw na sila'y maging dalaga sa pagkakaroon ng monthly period, sila'y nagkakaroon na rin ng crush.

At kapag sumalubong ito sa pagka-crush din ng mga kalalakihan, anak ng tokwa, diyan na sila maka-crash at mabubuntis ang kababaihan.

Lalo na sa parte ng mga estudyanteng nasa senior high school na katumbas noon ng first at second year college, panahon na nila ang pagliligawan na nauwi sa pag-aasawa pagtuntong nila sa ika-18 kaarawan.

Bago mag-debut, may nangyayari nang ayaw piktan ng mga gwardiyang magulang pero nalulusutan karaniwan ng mga wais na kabataan.

#### EXCLUSIVE

Uso noong unang panahon ang exclusive schools para sa babae at lalaki.

At mayroon pa ring ganitong mga iskul.

Pero paglipas ng panahon at dahil sa pangangailangan, 'yung marami, ginawa nang coed o pinaghalong babae at lalaki ang papasok sa iskul at maging sa mga classroom.

Dapat umano maglayang magkasama-sama ang mga babae at lalaki sa iskul.

'Yung iba naman, nilusaw ang patakaran sa exclusivity dahil sa paglit ng populasyon ng mga nag-eeenrol, lalo na sa mga pribadong iskul.

Lugi ang abutin nila kung ipipilit nila ang hiwalay na pag-aaral ng mga babae at lalaki.

Lalo ngayong libre ang pag-aaral sa mga pampublikong paaralan mula kinder at elementary hanggang high school at kolehiyo.

#### SERYOSOHIN

Kung sakaling ser-yosohin ng mga mambabatas ang nasabing panukala at maging batas, makatutulong nga laban sa pagbubuntis ng mga dalagita at pagkakaroon ng mga kabataan ng sakit sa sex na HIV-AIDS.

Wala kasing magagawa naman ang DepEd kundi iimplementa ang batas.

Alalahaning sa maraming pagkakataon, nabibigo ang mga magulang, pamilya at guro na kontrolin ang mga kabataan sa mga sexual escapade ng mga ito.

Kung may batas para sa pagkontrol ng mga ito, may hawak ang mga magulang, pamilya at titer na kapangyarihan laban sa kawalan ng disiplina sa sex ng mga kabataan.

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo, maaaring iparating sa 09228403333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com.