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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



DENR IPINATIGIL ANG OPERASYON NG CDO MEAT PROCESSING PLANT HANGGANG SA MAISAAYOS ANG PAGLABAG SA ECC

PANSAMANTALANG ipinahinto ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang operasyon ng meat processing plant ng CDO Foodsphere, Inc. sa Malvar, Batangas dahil sa paglabag sa ilang nakasaad sa Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) nito.

Setyembre 26, 2019 nang ilabas ng DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Region 4-A ang cease-and-desist order para sa CDO Foodsphere, Inc. na mayroong 60,000-square meter manufacturing plant sa Malvar, Batangas na kayang mag-produce ng 93,000 metric tons ng processed meat products kada taon.

Ang inilabas na cease-and-desist order ng EMB-CALABAZON sa CDO Malvar plant ay dahil na rin sa mabahong amoy na nagmumula sa "rendering area" at wastewater facility nito na nakaaapekto sa kapaligiran at maaaring

makaperwisyo sa kalusugan ng publiko.

Ayon sa kautusan na nilagdaan ni EMB-CALABARZON Regional Director Noemi Paradana, ang CDO Malvar plant ay napatunayang lumabag sa Presidential Decree 1586 o mas kilala sa tawag na Environmental Impact Statement System at DENR Administrative Order 2003-30 partikular na ang Condition No. 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.

Batay sa nakasaad sa Condition No. 13 ng ECC, sumang-ayon ang CDO na kapag ang kanilang proyekto ay nakaaapekto sa kapaligiran at nagiging banta sa kalusugan ng publiko ay agad na ipatitigil ang operasyon nito hanggang



DR. HILDA C. ONG

hindi naisasaayos ang nakitang paglabag.

Bago ang paglalabas ng cease-and-desist order ay nauna nang nabigyan ng EMB ng notice of violation ang CDO Foodsphere noong Oktubre ng nakalipas na taon upang ayusin ang mga nakitang paglabag ngunit binalewala lamang ito ng naturang kumpanya.

Nitong Agosto nang makatanggap ng reklamo ang EMB-CALABARZON mula sa mga residente laban sa CDO dahil sa mabahong amoy na nagmumula sa pabrika sa kasagsagan ng operasyon nito mula hapon hanggang gabi. Ang reklamong ito ay napatunayan ng EMB-CALABARZON na nagsagawa ng imbestigasyon sa nasabing lugar.

"Na-observe po talaga namin na meron pong unpleasant smell, foul odor na nanggagaling roon sa rendering area at doon sa anaerobic pond," sabi pa ni Paranada na nanguna sa isinagawang imbestigasyon ng EMB.

"This is alarming considering that CDO produces food products," paliwanag pa ni Paranada at idinagdag pa nito na ang wastewater na itinatapon ng CDO Foodsphere ay napupunta sa Alulod River na dumadaloy sa Taal Lake.

Ayon pa kay Paranada, noong Oktubre, 2018 nang maglabas sila ng notice of violation laban sa CDO dahil sa hindi nito pagtupad sa mga nakasaad sa ECC kabilang na dito ang paglalabas ng mabahong amoy.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Proposed 265 Hectare Pasay Harbour Reclamation Project
Pasay City Government
Within Coastal Waters of Manila Bay in the Territorial Jurisdiction of the City of Pasay



Figure PD-3. Relative Location of the SNS and the 265 Pasay Projects and Navigational Route

Project Description Report

PD-25

San Nicolas Shoal: The shaded area is the main dredging site

Reclamation's downside: Cavite's remaining coral, fish pens to be wiped out

Cavite's coastal towns have very little coral cover left. The remaining coral field, including the hundreds of fish pens that line up the coastal waters, will have to be sacrificed in the drive to create more land out of the Manila Bay.

This conclusion came from no less than the environmental impact study commissioned by Davao's favorite son, Dennis Uy, to support his group's application to build two islands in the middle of Manila Bay.

According to Technotrix Consultancy Services, the ideal and most economical landfill to create the two islands, with a combined area of 265 hectares, will have to come from dredging a 20,000-hectare field within the San Nicolas Shoal along the coastal towns of Ternate, Naic, Tanza, and Rosario, all in Cavite province.



**VICTOR
C. AGUSTIN**

Incidentally, that shoal, according to Technotrix's Edgardo Alabastro, who is also vice chairman of the environment committee of the Federation of

Philippine Industries, is already denuded.

"The EIS (environmental impact study) Report for the SNS (San Nicolas Shoal) stated the absence of major marine species and that there are essentially no coral covers except for approximately two to four percent coral cover for the Municipality of Ternate, while the rest of the quarry area has no coral community," Alabastro's study said.

As to the coastal fishing industry, "the relevance of the location of the (San Nicolas Shoal) relative to the project lies in the potential damage(s) to the fish lifts close to the navigational lane of the dredging/reclamation vessel."

As to the risk of flooding, while the five-year dredging and reclamation is ongoing, this is what the study said:

"Barangay 76, Zone 10 fronting the site and hosting onshore establishments are considered DIAs (direct impact areas) for socio-economic aspects and perhaps for environmental/risks aspects as well, principally regarding flooding and storm surges."

Barangay 76, Zone 10, according to Google Maps, is bound by the Libertad Channel, Harrison St., and covers, yikes!, the entire Mall of Asia.

The "perception of floods" might also affect the Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Coconut Palace, Philippine International Convention Center, and Harbour Square, the study added.

As for the feared storm surge and tsunami, the good news is that the two Dennis Uy islands will form a protective barrier around the very same area that their reclamation would put them into flood-risk category.

Incidentally, the first and closer of the two islands is about 1.68 kilometers from the JW Diokno Blvd., but the study is silent as to how the Dennis Uy-Chinese engineering consortium aims to connect the islands to the mainland – the Philippine mainland.

Proposed 265 Hectare Pasay Harbour Reclamation Project
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Within Coastal Waters of Manila Bay in the Territorial Jurisdiction of the City of Pasay



Figure PD-4. Google Earth Map Indicating the Proposed Project

Project Description Report

PD-7

Green and go: The two Dennis Uy Islands

Heard through the grapevine

There will be job openings for four additional Cabinet secretaries, and dozens of undersecretaries and assistant secretaries, perhaps as early as next year, when the four proposed additional departments – housing, water, disaster resilience, and overseas Filipino workers – shall have sailed through the legislative mill.



11k volunteers lead big cleanup at SM by the Bay

AN ESTIMATED 11,000 volunteers—students, professionals and members of the community—collected 31,564 kilograms of non-biodegradable waste from the recent International Coastal Cleanup event at the Central Park of SM by the Bay at the Mall of Asia Complex in Pasay City.

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

It aims to raise awareness and foster action in keeping coastlines clean for future generations.

The ICC is one of the biggest events of SM by the Bay, as part of its advocacy in caring for the environment and keeping our bays free of trash.

SM by the Bay and SM Mall of Asia conducts quarterly cleanup drives, and has been supporting this international initiative since 2015. To date, more than 700,000 kilograms of trash has been collected. SM's regular bay cleanup activities support the Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

"When we see people gathering from all walks of life, from all age groups, doing something with a common goal, it just warms the heart to see that people actually care about the environment and they're doing it with their loved ones as well, here at SM by the Bay. We at SM remain committed to supporting our communities, by doing our part in caring for the environment," said Perkin So, senior assistant vice president of SM Mall of Asia.

Despite the rains, thousands of the paired volunteers were assigned to different stations, as one served as the collector and other the tabulator. Data collected was then forwarded to Ocean Conservancy for final tabulation.



MATATANDAAN na naging mainit na isyu ang planong reclamation sa paligid ng Manila Bay. Ang nasabing malaking proyekto ay umusbong sa kaisipan ng mamamayan sa mga nalalabing buwan bago ang eleksiyon nitong taon. Isa sa mga nagtutulak nito ay ang dating mayor ng Manila na si Joseph Estrada. Ang sasakupin na lugar ng reclamation sa Manila Bay ay aabot mula sa Tondo, Manila hanggang sa may Pasay City.

Noong pumutok ang planong ito, umalma muli ang mga militanteng grupo. Tahasang tumututol sila sa reclamation project sa Manila Bay dahil marami raw mga maralita at mga mangingisda ang mawawalan ng tirahan at hanapbuhay.

Matapos ang ilang buwan, ang Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) ay inaprubahan ang joint venture (JV) ng Udenna Development Corp., Ulticon Builders Inc., China Har-

bour Engineering Co. at ang Pasay City government para sa P62-billion land reclamation project na sasakop sa 265 hectares sa nasabing lunsod. Ayon sa PCC, hindi raw makasisira ang nasabing alok ng grupo sa kompetisyon ng negosyo sa nasabing lugar. Malaki pa nga raw ang posibilidad na lalaki ang merkado sa commercial at residential real estate sa Pasay City kapag ginawa ang nasabing reclamation area.

Marahil ang PCC ay isa lamang sa maraming ahensiya ng ating pamahalaan na nangailangan ng magbigay

basbas upang masimulan ang nasabing proyekto. Maaring mangangailangan din ng clearance mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources at ilan pang ahensiya ng gobyerno. Hindi kataka-taka na muling magpoprotesta ang ilang environment groups at militanteng grupo tungkol sa land reclamation sa Manila Bay. Aabot ng P62-billion ang gagastusin dito sa nasabing proyekto.

Isa sa mga hakbang ang pagbigay aprubal ng PCC. Marami pang kailangang ayusin ng grupong ito. Sa balitang ito, tiyak na nag-uusap

na ngayon ang mga militanteng grupo at ibang mga environmental group na marahas na tututol dito.

Ang Pasay Harbor City Corp. ay nagsumite ng unsolicited proposal para sa proyektong ito noong buwan ng Nobyembre 2017 at walang iba grupo ang nag-alok para rito. Ayon sa kasunduan ng JV, ang pamahalaan ng Pasay City ang sasagot sa pagsasaayos ng mga dokumento ng titulo sa pagsasa-legal ng mga reclaimed na lupain. Ang pribadong sektor naman ang gagastos sa proyektong ito.

Sundan sa pahina 14

MAGKAPE MUNA TAYO ULIT...

Mula sa pahina 5

Sa akin naman ay dapat matuloy ang proyektong ito. Hindi na iba ito sa mga reclamation project sa Singapore at sa Dubai. Malaki ang kikitahin ng ating gobyerno sa pamamagitan ng buwis kapag natuloy ang nasabing proyekto. Pagkakataon natin na ayusin ng mabuti ang latag ng nasabing lugar. Sa pagplano nito, tiyak na gagawa sila ng sistema upang magsilbing proteksiyon sa pagtapon ng

basura at dumi sa Manila Bay. Sa kasalukuyan, malaking problema ng pamahalaan ang walang habas na pagtapon ng basura sa Manila Bay.

Tulad sa bansang Singapore, maaari tayong magsimula ng malinis, masinop at maayos na mga lugar kung saan nandoon ang mga modernong gusali, makabago at malawak na kalsada, modernong transportasyon, paliparan, daungan ng mga barko, tourist attractions sa planong reclamation project. Sana ay matuloy na ito.



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Imee says land titling a major hurdle to Marawi rehabilitation

MARAWI'S rehabilitation is facing further delay unless the government works out a plan to speed up the titling of lands for the city's displaced residents, Sen. Imee R. Marcos said.

As the Senate tackled the 2020 budget of the Department of National Defense this week, Marcos pressed defense officials for a comprehensive plan beyond clearing Marawi of unexploded ordnances and debris by the end of October, two months past an August 30 deadline.

Marcos has proposed in Senate Bill 410 to give government lands, including a portion of military reservation areas, to Marawi evacuees who fled the 2017 terrorist siege that left their city in ruins.

"Habang nakatiwangwang ang siyudad eh nawawalang gana at nadidismaya ang mga kapatid nating Muslim [Our Muslim brothers are becoming disappointed, as the city continues to lie bare]," Marcos said.

The Marcos bill seeks to replace the provisional Task Force Bangon Marawi chaired by the housing secretary with a long-term Bangon Marawi Council chaired by the President.

President Duterte can declare that military reservation areas are no longer necessary for military use and that government land can be sold or awarded to Marawi residents, Marcos explained.

Marcos has also proposed to speed up Marawi's rehabilitation by easing requirements on procurement and construction for joint-venture projects in the city's most affected areas called Ground Zero, comprising 24 barangays covering a 250-hectare area.



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Imee: Land titling major hurdle in Marawi rehab

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EDITORIAL

Present danger

THE Philippine government's success in protecting public health and the environment from the deleterious effects of mercury poisoning is, without doubt, good news and most encouraging.

And the EcoWaste Coalition believes that the country is prepared to implement the provisions of the landmark "Minamata Convention on Mercury," which the government signed six years ago.

That's why leaders of EcoWaste, an environment-advocate group, renewed their appeal to the government to fast-track the country's ratification of the international treaty.

As a matter of fact, the country has already achieved a number of policy and regulatory milestones to control, if not eliminate, mercury pollution from human activities, said the group.

"We, therefore, request the Duterte government to ratify the treaty and secure the necessary concurrence by the Senate," according to Thony Dizon of the EcoWaste Coalition.

Dizon cited the phaseout of mercury-based medical devices, such as thermometers in 2010, and the ban on mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining in 2012.

He also cited the adoption of extended producer responsibility for mercury lamps in 2013 and the prohibition on over 135 mercury-contaminated skin whitening products from 2010 to 2018.

And last July 2019, the government launched the National Action Plan for the Phase-Out of Mercury-Added Products (MAPs) and the Management of the Associated Mercury-Containing Wastes (MAMCWs).

Dizon said EcoWaste Coalition launched the two in anticipation of the global phase out target by 2020 for specified MAPs.

As the coalition said, there is a rising sentiment that the government ought to ratify the pact since it will strengthen the country's resolute efforts to combat mercury pollution.



Fiscal regime in mining industry sought anew

ALBAY Rep. Joey Salceda has filed a measure that seeks an equitable imposition of royalty on mining operations within and outside mineral reservations.

Under House Bill (HB) 5022, which failed to pass in the 17th Congress, the royalty rate will be reduced from 5 percent to 3 percent for large-scale mining contractors within mineral reservations, while a margin-based royalty tax ranging from 1 to 5 percent will be imposed on large-scale mining operations outside mining reservation areas.

It also proposes to exempt small-scale metallic mining operations from paying royalty.

The current law requires such payment only in mining sites declared as mineral reservations.

HB 5022 will also put up a natural resource trust fund to be used by local governments where mines are located. This will be created from the annual payment of mining contractors to the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) of an additional 2-percent based on gross output for large-scale metallic mining, which will be remitted to the Bureau of the Treasury within the first quarter of the succeeding income year.

"On top of providing funds for rehabilitation of abandoned mines, prior to the enactment

of Republic Act 7942, the fund accumulates resource revenues from mining operations and extends their benefits to the next generations through educational programs, technological and research programs, health services, and disaster risk-reduction management initiatives," Salceda said in his explanatory note.

The fund will be used to support educational programs, technological, research programs of local relevance, disaster risk management, rehabilitation of abandoned mines, and health services programs of the communities directly affected by mining activities.

The bill also optimizes revenues

from mining agreements through an auctioning system to be established by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

"This will minimize awarding of mineral agreements based on asymmetrical information, first-come first-served system, and patronage politics. Moreover, it shall promote investments in mineral-rich areas through an online portal open to the public," said Salceda.

The bill also promotes participation in the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which requires full public disclosure of revenue collection and tax payments in the mining industry.

GLEE JALEA



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DOE deploys team to probe mudslide incident at Semirara coal mine

By MYRNA M. VELASCO

The Department of Energy (DOE) has sent out a team to investigate another mudslide tragedy at the Semirara mining facility in Antique province that is owned by the Consunji group.

The department indicated that based on initial information, the mudslide catastrophe reportedly resulted to at least one employee of Semirara Mining and Power Corporation (SMPC) missing.

"The DOE, through its Energy Resource Development Bureau, immediately deployed a team of geologists and mining engineers to conduct an on-site assessment," the agency said.

It added that "based on aerial and ground inspections of the DOE's technical team, the presence of mudflow was confirmed at the location of the incident."

This is not the first time that such mishap happened at the Semirara mines - the worst happened in July 2015 when part of the coal mine collapsed and that led to the deaths of some of its workers.

Semirara Mining's operations had been ordered suspend-

ed by the energy department that time - but had reopened after several months following institution of remedial measures by the company, because SMPC also needed to honor its contractual commitments to the power plants and industries it has been supplying coal to.

On this current mudslide incident, SMPC itself has reported to the DOE that the mining firm was in its "regular mining operations" - wherein it deployed heavy machinery on a drainage canal at the mining site's Molave pit in the south wall, when suddenly "an irregularity was detected at 1 am."

The company further reported to the department that "the mudslide occurred five minutes thereafter," or at around 1:05 a.m. on Thursday (October 3).

In a statement to the media, Energy Secretary Alfonso G. Cusi stressed: "We are thoroughly investigating the matter to determine the cause of the incident, and ensure that all of the safety standards and protocols were safely upheld."

As of this writing, the energy department has not issued any additional status report as to its investigation of the incident.

DoE starts Semirara mining probe

The Department of Energy (DoE) on Tuesday formally started investigating the May 2018 mudslide incident at Semirara Mining and Power Corp.'s (SMPC) facility in Caluya town, Antique.

The DoE previously deployed a team of geologists and mining engineers to conduct an on-site assessment.

"We are thoroughly investigating the matter to determine the cause of the incident, and ensure that all safety standards and protocols were strictly upheld," Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said.

"The DoE is sending its heartfelt prayers to all who were affected by the incident. And the SMPC has assured us of their full cooperation as we carefully look into the matter."

Based on the aerial and ground inspections of the DoE's technical team, mudflow was confirmed at the incident site.

On May 2018, an SMPC employee died after a landslide hit a portion of its mining site called the Molave Pit.

Reports from members of the Save Antique Movement in Caluya identified the victim as Lpath Equia Felipe, 23, a resident of Barangay Banago.

According to Semirara's initial report to the DoE, regular mining operations were ongoing with heavy machinery, PS27, working on the drainage canal at the Molave Pit of the site's south wall when an irregularity was detected at around 1 a.m.

The mudslide occurred five minutes thereafter, at 1:05 a.m., hitting the PS27 equipment and its operator.

The Molave Pit is one of two operating mines on the island. The other is the Narra Pit.

It is from these two pits that some 70 percent of SMPC's production are sourced for local demand.

Secretary Cusi said the DoE will continue to issue updates on the ongoing investigation.

Maria Romero



The Energy Resource Development Bureau has deployed a team of geologists and mining engineers to conduct an on-site assessment of the mudslide incident at the Semirara Mining and Power Corp.'s facility in Antique.



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DOE probing mudslide in Semirara coal mine project

By Alena Mae S. Flores

THE Energy Department said it launched an investigation on the mudslide incident at Semirara Mining and Power Corp.'s coal mining facility in Antique province which resulted in one missing employee.

"The DOE is sending its heartfelt prayers to all who were affected by the incident. We are also continuing to pray for the safety of the personnel involved in the search and rescue operations," Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said in a statement.

According to Semirara, a mudslide occurred in Southwest Tungao, Semirara Island at 1:05 a.m. on Oct. 2. An operator of a power shovel that was swept by the mudslide was still missing, it said.

"We have notified his next of kin and have assured them of our full support to them during this difficult time. We are fully cooperating with the Department of Energy in its investigation of this incident," Semirara said in a separate statement.

The department, through its Energy Resource Development Bureau, immediately deployed a team of geologists and mining engineers to conduct an on-site assessment.

Based on the aerial and ground inspections of the department's technical team, the presence of mud flow was confirmed at the location of the incident.

Initial reports revealed that regular mining operations were ongoing with heavy machinery, PS27, working on the drainage canal at the Molave Pit of the site's south wall, when an irregularity was supposedly detected at 1 a.m. of Oct 2. The mudslide occurred five minutes thereafter, hitting the PS27 equipment and its operator.



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Magasin ng baril nahulog **Iligan CEMO official, nakaligtas sa tangkang pagpatay**

NAKALIGTAS sa kamatayan ang abogado si Ranulfo Cenas, hepe ng City Environment Management Office (CEMO) nang makaligtas sa pagtatangka sa kaniyang buhay noong Huwebes ng umaga, 3 Oktubre, sa labas mismo ng kaniyang tanggapan.

Ayon kay Edilberto Don, sang CEMO staff, akmang papasok sa gate ng City Engineering Compound ang biktimang si Cenas nang makarinig ng tunog ng baril na ikinakasa.

Nang lumingon si Cenas, nakita niya ang isang

lalaking nakatutok ang baril sa kanya ngunit biglang nahulog ang magasin.

Agad pumasok si Cenas sa loob ng compound kung saan din matatagpuan ang tanggapan ng alkalde ng Iligan na si Celso Regencia.

Kalaunan ay narinig umano niya ang putok ng baril ngunit hindi na niya alam kung saan ito pinatama.

Patuloy na iniimbestigahan ng pulisya ang insidente upang matukoy ang motibo at kung sino ang nasa likod ng tangkang pagpatay sa city hall executive.



NAGREKLAMO kama-kailan ang Department of Energy sa 'madayang' dagdag-bawas ng presyo ng mga produktong petrolyo ng mga kompanyang langis.

Unang nagkaroon ng malakihanag dagdag-presyo o oil price hike dalawang linggo makaraang may bumomba sa pinakamalaking dalawang pasilidad sa langis sa Saudi Arabia.

Makaraang humupa ang problema, nagkaroon naman ng bawas-presyo.

Ayon sa DOE, dapat umanong may 22 sentimos na karagdagang halaga sa bawas-presyo ng gasolina at 6 sentimos ng diesel.

'Yun bang === kulang ng 22 sentimos at 6 sentimos ang bawas-presyo.

Lumalabas sa simpleng salita na may pandaraya o pagsasamantala ang mga kompanyang langis, lalo na ang 13 kompanya sa mga ito.

Kung sino-sino ang mga kompanya ay hindi malinaw subalit heto ang ilan sa mga kompanyang nag-o-operate sa bansa: Petron, Shell, Caltex, Flying V, Total Phils, Unioil, Seacoil, Jet-ti, SBDI, Eastern, City Oil, Metro Oil Subic, Uno Fuel, Nation Petroleum, USA 88, Filoil Gas Co., Phoenix at nasa 1,080 na independent at maliliit.

MAY BATAYAN

Sabi ng DOE, may basehan ang kwenta nito na hindi tugma sa aktwal na bawas-presyo ng mga kompanya.

Nauna rito, sinabi ng ahensya na katamtaman ang dagdag-presyo na ipinataw noong una ng mga kompanyang langis kaugnay ng problema ng Saudi Arabia.

Ngunit may kuwestiyon na ang bawas-presyo makaraan.

Dahil dito, pinagpapaliwanag ng DOE ang 13 kompanya kung bakit kulang ang bawas-presyo ng mga ito kumpara sa inaasahan nito.

MAGALING MANGATWIRAN

May mga kompanya nang nagsabi na susunod sila sa direktiba ng DOE na magpaliwanag sila.

Pero may pasubali sila.

'Yun bang === mata-tamaan ang karapatan



MADAYANG DAGDAG-BAWAS SA PRESYO NG LANGIS

nilang magtakda ng presyo dahil "deregulated" umano ang negosyo sa langis.

Nariryan kasi ang Oil Deregulation Law na nagtititik ng kanilang karapatan na magdagdag o magbawas o magdagdag-bawas ng presyo at hindi sila pupwedeng dik-tahan ng gobyerno.

Binabalewala nila ang sinasabi ng DOE na may kapangyarihan ang gobyerno na protektahan ang interes ng konsyumer o mamamayan mula sa pagsasamantala ng mga kompanyang langis.

Consuelo de bobo na lang ang pagsunod nila sa direktiba ng DOE?

LUGI ANG MAMAMAYAN

Kung tititigan ang pahayag ng DOE, lugin-lugin ang mga mamamayan.

Imadyinin na lang natin ang mga nasa negosyong transportasyon na 63 porsyento ang parte sa konsumo ng mga produktong petrolyo.

Mula 'yan sa magtatraysikel hanggang mga magdyi-dyip, bus, barko at eroplano.

Nariryan din ang mga magsasaka na gumagamit ng makinarya sa pag-aararo at pagpapatubig.

Apektado rin ang mga nasa elektrisidad dahil mahal ang produksyon nila ng elektrisidad na kailangan naman nilang si-ngilin nang mahal ang mga kostumer.

Ang mga pabrika na gumagana sa generator at elektrisidad, matindi rin ang konsumo ng langis at elektrisidad kaya ang mga produkto nila ay nagmamahal din.

Lahat ay biktima ng mga pagsasamantala.

GOBYERNO BIKTIMA RIN

Ang isa pang matindi, mga Bro, biktima rin mismo ang gobyerno mula pamahalaang barangay hanggang sa mga munisipyo, lungsod, lalawigan, Palasyo, Kongreso at Supreme Court.

Ang daming sasakyan na gamit ng gobyerno at ang laki rin ng konsumo ng mga ito sa kuryente.

Sa pandaraya ng mga

kompanyang langis, natatamaan ang mga sasakyan ng pamahalaan gaya ng police patrol, military trucks at ambulansya.

Pati ang mga barangay patrol, at eroplano at helikopter ng gobyerno, tinatamaan din.

Aba, kung kukwentahin kada litro ang konsumo ng mga sasakyanang panlupa, pandagat at panghimpapawid ng gobyerno, malulula ka sa gastos.

Tiyak na bilyones na piso ang nasasayang sa overpricing ng mga kompanya ng langis.

At dahil ang elektrisidad na gamit ng gobyerno ay galing sa mga planta ng kuryente na gumagamit ng mga produktong petrolyo para lumikha ng kuryente, nasasayang din ang buwis ng mga mamamayan o salaping bayan.

Pero hindi lang nasasayang kundi nadayaya rin ang mga taxpayer.

BUNGAL KAHIT TAMA

Sa kabuuan, mga Bro, kahit gaano kata-pang ang DOE, bungal naman.

Gustong kumagat para itama ang mali at ipagtanggol ang mga mamamayan at gobyerno pero inutil.

Malinaw na malinaw na ang sangkalan sa dulo ng lahat ng mga kompanya ng langis sa pandaraya sa dagdag-bawas ng presyo ay ang Oil Deregulation Law.

Palaging may rason ang mga kompanya ng langis kung sila'y magdagdag-presyo at mandaya sa bawas-presyo gaya ng gulo sa ibang mga bansa.

Pero ang Oil Deregulation Law talaga ang sandalan nila laban sa lahat.

Ano ang gagawin ng DOE sa nasabing batas na batayan ng pagsasamantala o pandaraya?

Anomang reaksiyon o reklamo, maaaring ipa-rating sa 09228403333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com.

Water crisis hits town fed by Banahaw springs

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallarijrINQ

LUCBAN, QUEZON—Taps have gone dry in this town at the foot of Mt. Banahaw, the mountain spanning the provinces of Quezon and Laguna known for its rivers, springs and waterfalls.

Cher Zabate, supervisor of local government-run Apolinario de la Cruz Waterworks Facilities, said water level in the intake tanks of Lucban's reservoirs had dropped to the critical mark as the lack of heavy and continuous rain in recent weeks had dried up springs in the town.

Zabate said the declining water supply was observed in reservoirs in Sindico, Baraka, Pagsipi and Samil starting August.

'Unprecedented'

"We're used to falling water levels during this time of the year. But this year is different because [the] lack of rain [is a serious situation, possibly] due to climate change," Zabate said.

She said even Lucban's popular canals, where clean water from Mt. Banahaw flows throughout the town, had dried up. Banahaw is also called "Vul-

can de Agua" or "water volcano," due to the abundant water from its springs and rivers.

"This water crisis is unprecedented in Lucban," said Rommel Babierra, a high school senior, told the Inquirer.

He said residents used to

drink straight from the taps, "and suddenly, it's (water) now gone".

Lucban Mayor Celso Dator agreed that the water crisis being experienced in his town could be attributed to climate change and erratic weather.

"This time of the year should

be rainy season, but there is a serious lack of rain this year," Dator said.

But the mayor appealed for patience and assured residents that the water crisis would end soon, saying the local government would undertake a mas-

sive rehabilitation of the town's reservoirs and repair of distribution pipes.

The local government has been sending firetrucks to different villages in Lucban to deliver water to households until supply stabilizes. INQ



WATER QUEUE Residents in Lucban, Quezon, bring out their pails and other containers to fetch water from a delivery truck amid a water shortage in the town. At right, the canals of Lucban, where clean water flows from Mt. Banahaw, are starting to dry up. —PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCBAN FORUM FACEBOOK PAGE



Manila Water asks SC to reconsider P2 B penalty

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Ayala-led Manila Water Co. Inc. has filed a motion for reconsideration with the Supreme Court with respect to the penalties for its failure to comply with environmental laws.

This after the SC upheld the P2 billion in penalties it had imposed on Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Maynilad Water Services

Inc. and Manila Water.

The SC held each of the concessionaires jointly and severally liable with the MWSS for P921.4 million for the period May 2009 to August 2019.

"The decision, if it attains finality, will affect us to the extent that we will be solidarily liable to pay the P921 million fine and the daily fine of P322,102 with the MWSS, which daily fine shall be subject to a further 10 percent

increase every two years," Manila Water said.

A six percent interest will also be imposed on the total amount of the fines should there be a delay in its payment.

The ongoing legal proceedings originated from a complaint filed by the regional directors of the Environmental Management Bureau before the Pollution Adjudication Board against MWSS, Maynilad and Manila Water for

violation of the Clean Water Act of 2004.

This is particularly the five-year deadline imposed for connecting the existing sewage line found in all subdivisions, condominiums, commercial centers, hotels, sports and recreational facilities, hospitals, market places, public buildings, industrial complex and other similar establishments including households, to an

available sewerage system.

The law mandates MWSS, as the government agency vested with the duty to provide water and sewerage services, and the concessionaires in Metro Manila and other highly urbanized cities, to connect all existing sewage

lines to the available sewerage system within five years from the law's effectivity in 2004.

The decision also enjoins all water supply and sewerage facilities and concessionaires in Metro Manila and other highly urbanized cities to comply strictly with the law.



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Water firms appeal SC ruling on P1.8-B fine

METRO MANILA'S water service concessionaires have asked the Supreme Court to reverse its ruling imposing fines totalling close to P2 billion against them and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems (MWSS) for violations of Republic Act No. 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

The high court on Aug. 6 upheld the decision of the Court of Appeals that found the regulator and the concessionaires liable for violating Section 8 of the law.

Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and Manila Water Company, Inc. are each jointly liable with MWSS to pay P921.5 million covering the period May 7, 2009 to Aug. 6, the date of promulgation of the Supreme Court decision. They are also fined the initial amount of

P322,102 per day subject to 10% increase every two years until full compliance with the law.

This stemmed from the fine imposed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) against them for failure within five years after the law took effect in early 2004 to install and maintain wastewater treatment facilities.

The water concessionaires elevated their cases to the appellate court in 2012, which dismissed their appeals.

In its 56-page motion for reconsideration, Manila Water said it complied with the law as 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 coming into force.

Manila Water asked that the case be referred to Court of Appeals or the DENR for determination of factual issues.

It noted that under, its concession agreement with MWSS in 1997, it is required to offer supply sewerage services and make new connections within a period of 40 years. "However, the decision interprets Section 8 of the Clean Water Act to mean that petitioner Manila Water must unconditionally comply with all its obligations under the concession agreement within five years from the law's effectivity," Manila Water said. "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 (5) 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 said that by 2009, it connected existing sewage lines of 61,166 out of 62,833 establishments, equivalent to 97% interconnection.

Maynilad, in its 158-page motion for reconsideration, said that the court failed to reconcile its ruling with its 2008 decision on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay which gave MWSS and the concessionaires until 2037 to perform its obligations under Section 8 of the law. — Vann Marlo M. Villegas



MCWM awaits gov't decision on proposed waste-to-energy facility

METRO CLARK Waste Management Corp. (MCWM) is still waiting for the government's decision on its unsolicited proposal to build a \$210-million waste-to-energy facility in New Clark City.

"Waste to energy is not a power plant solution, in the first place it's a waste management facility to reduce waste to try to utilize the most energy out of waste because there is no better way to get the energy out than generating energy out of it," MCWM Founder Holger Holst said in a briefing on Thursday in Quezon City.

"I don't know what's after 2050, but imagine, at the moment the Philippines has 100 million people, in 30 years it will be double, and that is the challenge for the future," he told reporters after the briefing.

MCWM is partly owned by German conglomerates BN Ingenieure GmbH and Heers & Brockstedt Umwelttechnik GmbH. It has a 100-hectare landfill site in Sitio Kalangitan in Brgy. Cutcut II, Capas, Tarlac, which is part of the Sub Zone D of the Clark Economic Zone.

MCWM President and Chief Executive Officer Rufo B. Colayco said the company has submitted its unsolicited proposal to the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) last February.

Mr. Colayco said the BCDA asked for more information only a week ago. The company has to submit the additional information within a month.

Sought for comment, BCDA has yet respond to *BusinessWorld* as of press time.

The waste-to-energy facility is targeted to be completed in three years. Given the current situation and the long process that would involve a Swiss challenge, Mr. Colayco said that the company hopes to start construction of the facility by the middle of or late 2020.

With the growing population, the company projects by 2025 there will be 77,765 tons of garbage collected every day, coming only from cities.

Once completed, MCWM's proposed waste-to-energy facility can process 2,000 tons which could generate 35 megawatts of electrical renewable energy for New Clark City. Currently, the landfill facility is receiving an average of 2,500 tons of waste from areas in Central Luzon. It is expecting higher waste collection this year versus about 700,000 tons it collected last year.

This will also reduce amount of residual waste disposed at the landfill by 70%, which can extend the lifespan of the solid waste management (SWM) system.

"... There are NGOs [nongovernment organizations] who will oppose anything, but as far as the government... they are all aware of this technology. It's not an issue for them," Mr. Colayco explained.

"We can only show what the problem is. Waste management will be a big problem in the future... It was not so in the minds of people, especially in countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, very high populations. It's getting bigger every day," Mr. Holst said. — **Vincent Mariel P. Galang**



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Bill creating Water department filed

ALBAY Rep. Jose Ma. S. Salceda has filed a bill creating a Department of Water Resources Management and the Water Regulatory Commission.

House Bill 4944 or the National Water Act of 2019 will seek to address the country's

"fragmented and uncoordinated" management of water resources.

"There is an urgent need for an integrated and coordinated planning and implementation of programs and projects that promote synchronized, sustainable and science-based management of the country's water resources," he said in the bill's explanatory note.

This would address the imbalance in water resource use, reduced water availability, declining water quality, flooding and other water-related issues in many parts of the country, he said.

The Department of Water Resources Management will be the primary agency for planning, policy formulation, appropriation, use, development, conservation and protection of the country's water resources.

The Water Regulatory Commission will be an independent, quasi-judicial body under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. It will impose price controls, void contracts and impose fines and penalties. —

Vince Angelo C. Ferreras



Property firms urged to help address climate change

By Daxim L. Lucas
@daxINQ

The operator of an online real estate marketplace operating internationally urged stakeholders in the Philippine property sector to help address climate change issues by building more resilient and sustainable communities.

During a recent forum, officials of Lamudi—which markets properties over the internet in 34 countries—said climate change was a global issue that should push local policymakers to address the country’s weak spots while harnessing its strengths.

In particular, Lamudi CEO Bhavna Suresh said that though the country might be facing a challenging situation, “there is plenty to be done in response to climate change, from big, industrial efforts to small, household changes.”

“All of these inequalities that exist in the world today are getting heightened because of global warming,” he said.

Particular focus in this regard should be given to property developments in coastal areas, many of which are moving toward greater urbanization.

According to Angela Ibay, who heads the World Wide Fund for Nature’s climate and energy program, “most coastal municipalities want to be cities eventually.”

“How do we push them towards not just sustainability but also push them to also look at measures that will make them resilient as well?” she asked.

In a country that is dotted with high-rise, mixed-use buildings and small coastal homes, the effort to save the environment goes together with measures developers can take like planting trees to encourage the growth of foliage that relieves some of the urban heat being experienced by built-up cities today.

During the forum, the issue of water supply was also highlighted as it remains a constant threat despite the steady

stream of typhoons that affect the country each year.

According to former Manila Water Co. Inc. CEO Ferdinand dela Cruz, the matter was particularly urgent for the Philippine capital’s growing population.

“It’s up to us to make hard choices for us to be resilient,” he said. “There are no easy choices at this point. For us to make that, we need to have a constructive dialog and without the misinformation.”

He also mentioned the disparity in the supply and demand for water, saying the road map of policymakers to address supply shortages were being hampered by execution issues.

Long-term solutions to water shortage and climate change are further hampered by the lack of initiative at the individual level. According to Dela Cruz, people forget about the problem once they have water, but it quickly resurfaces when another water shortage is felt. INQ



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YOUNG AND AWAKE Students joined the global #ClimateStrike campaign held in different parts of country and the world (CASEY MATEO)

CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL

Where is the Philippines on the map of these global phenomenon?



CITIES SINKING Some cities and municipalities in the Philippines are fast sinking due to climate change (AFP/MANILA BULLETIN)



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Climate change is real, 2/2

By **JESSICA PAG-IWAYAN**

Friday, Sept. 27, marked the last day of the weeklong global student #ClimateStrike kicked off by 16-year-old Swedish climate activist **Greta Thunberg** the week before, on Sept. 20, in New York. This students' strike aims to call the attention of world leaders, giant conglomerates, and every individual on earth about the seriousness of climate change and that we have to make immediate actions to save our planet before it's too late.

In the Philippines, hundreds of students from different parts of the country participated in this youth movement. The Department of Education (DepEd) even released a memorandum telling schools and other educational institutes to "excuse" their students who would join the #ClimateStrike. Spearheaded by Youth Strike 4 Climate Philippines together with other climate organizations, students from various locations such as Quezon City, Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, and Palawan went on strike.

But is climate change so serious that it necessitates students as young as gradeschoolers taking a day off their studies to go out and join street rallies, wanting their voices to be heard?

THE TEMPERATURE RISE

Because of the increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, there has been a rise in global temperature. Based on a report by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), "the planet's average surface temperature has risen about 0.9 degree Celsius since the late 19th century."

Locally, this year, Metro Manila set a new record for the hottest day on a dry season, at 35.9 degrees Celsius. This may not be the hottest day ever in Manila, but it is almost as bad as the 38.5 degrees Celsius recorded on May 14, 1987.

This continuous rise in global temperatures has consequences. Our oceans are suffering. Reports show that "the top 700 meters (about 2,300 feet) of ocean show warming more than 0.4 degrees Fahrenheit since 1969." Ice sheets in the polar region have also been melting at a faster rate. People from Iceland, for example, held a funeral on August for the first glacier they had lost because of climate change. That same month, Greenland's ice sheets lost 12.5 billion tons of water in just one day, the highest recorded melting in a single day.

THE PHILIPPINES ON THE MAP OF CLIMATE CHANGE

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace's (IEP) annual Global Index Report, the most alarming fact is that the Philippines is among countries most at risk of experiencing the brunt of these climate hazards. IEP founder and executive chairman **Steve Killelea** told *ABC* that the Pacific islands "are going to be massively impacted by rising sea levels."

In another study, Metro Manila ranked second on a list of major cities around the world that are sinking. Reports indicate that Metro Manila is sinking by around 10 centimeters annually. The municipality of Bulakan in Bulacan, as well as other neighboring towns in Pampanga, has been sinking by around four to six centimeters every year since 2003.

The Philippines has also been experiencing extreme weather, which is another effect of climate change. Just this year, the country had an El Niño that caused shortage in water supply, particularly for Metro Manila residents. In August, Typhoon *Ineng* left Ilocos Norte in a state of calamity with over P1.1 billion in damages to infrastructures and local livelihood.

LOCAL OFFICIALS SUPPORTING #CLIMATESTRIKE

As the global #ClimateStrike created history in different parts of the world, our local government officials stood with the youth. Senator **Sonny Angara** applauds Greta for her courage in fighting for the world's future. "We admire her for delivering that powerful message on the world's big stage," he told *Manila Bulletin Lifestyle*, referring to Greta's powerful speech at the recent United Nation's Climate Summit where she told world leaders "we are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you?"

Antique congresswoman **Loren Legarda** also expressed her support. "I stand by the Youth Strike for Climate Philippines—united with the youth all over the world in the Global Climate Strike, and with its demand for ambitious and faster climate action," she said in a press statement. "The climate emergency is unequivocal and the only fitting response is to change our ways, from our way of thinking and living, to our way of pursuing development. Heeding the demands of our youth is not a choice but a moral imperative, our moral responsibility for the generation of today and of the future."

*The
Philippines
is the
country with
the highest
risk of
experiencing
climate
hazards than
any other
part of the
world.*



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Scientists call on mayors to help tackle climate emergency

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Sixty-five scientists from 11 different countries called on mayors across the globe to reduce meat in their public canteens, in order to tackle the climate emergency, the environmental group Greenpeace said.

Among them is Filipino scientist, Dr. Vincent Hilomen of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, who has been studying the impact of climate change on fish and fisheries. Vulnerable sectors in Philippine cities and municipalities are among the first to feel the impacts of the climate emergency, including farming and fishing

communities, Hilomen said.

"Industrial meat production and consumption is a double whammy for our small farmers and fisherfolk. Aside from their source of livelihood being exploited, the carbon emissions from the livestock industry is among the greatest contributors to fueling the impacts of the climate crisis, making droughts and storms harsher. This is a welcome call from scientists. The potential efforts from cities and municipalities will be a boon to those who produce the country's food," said Virginia Benosa-Llorin, campaigner of Greenpeace Philippines.

Pete Smith, professor at the University of Aberdeen and Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has spearheaded the scientists' joint call to action that was published today. Among the many prominent voices gathered is also Canadian scientist and broadcaster, David Suzuki. Together, they are calling for the reduced consumption of livestock products to greatly lower the environmental impacts of food production and benefit human health: "To create a future that is healthy for both citizens and the planet, we call on mayors today to reduce

meat in the meals served in our canteens and to increase the share of plant-based foods."

Currently, livestock emissions, including impacts from deforestation for feed production, already account for 14.5% of direct global greenhouse gas emissions, as much as all cars, trains, ships and airplanes combined. If no sufficient steps are taken, this could grow even further.

"Cities can play a crucial role in helping citizens to reduce their consumption of livestock products, and to enable the changes necessary to meet ambitious climate change targets," Smith said.



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Continuing reports on worsening climate

A WEEK after a 16-year-old Swedish girl assailed the world's leaders for not doing enough to hold back climate change, the world is probably back to its usual ways, especially the nations said to be responsible for most of the climate changing that is endangering the earth.

The girl, Greta Thunberg, spoke at the Climate Change Action Summit organized by United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres held at the UN headquarters in New York City. She said the world's leaders are failing the young people of the earth because of their inaction.

In his own speech to the assembly, Secretary General Guterres said, "Nature is angry. And we fool ourselves if we think we can fool nature, because nature always strikes back, and around the world nature is striking back with fury." He was referring to the increasing violence of hurricanes and typhoons, the fast-melting glaciers in the polar regions, and the resulting rise in ocean levels.

Scientists have blamed climate change on the rising world temperature, caused in turn by increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other polluting gasses into the atmosphere by the world's industries. The United States, as the world's leading industrial nation, is said to be the top source of this pollution, but it has been the only country to reject the Paris Climate Change agreement to limit the rise in world temperature to 1.5 degrees below pre-industrial levels.

US President Donald Trump mocked Thunberg on Tweeter, saying "She seems like a very happy

girl looking forward to a bright and wonderful future," when actually she had told the world's leaders – and that included Trump – in her speech at the UN: "You are failing us."

A special report was released last week by the UN-backed Inter-government Panel on Climate Change on the unabated warming of the earth's oceans and the rapid thawing of the frozen areas of the earth. Agricultural areas near the coastlines will become less productive as sea water intrudes into them, the report said. There will be more severe tropical cyclones. Many places will be much drier, others will be much wetter. Fish catches will be less as sea waters become warmer.

Another report by the Global Peace Index 2019 said the Philippines is the most susceptible country to hazards brought about by climate change, followed by Japan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, and Pakistan.

The Philippines has its own national program of support for the Paris Agreement, including a pledge to become less dependent on coal and other fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy. Our contribution to the world's industrial emissions, however, is so much less than those of the US, China, India, and other industrial giants.

But we must persevere in our efforts and hope that the rest of the world, particularly the worst polluters – perhaps as they begin to be hit more frequently by more and more violent hurricanes, heat waves, and floods – will come around do their part to avert a future hostile to the entire human race.



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But we must persevere in our efforts and hope that the rest of the world, particularly the worst polluters – perhaps as they begin to be hit more frequently by more and more violent hurricanes, heat waves, and flood – will come around do their part to avert a future hostile to the entire human race.



Art and our oceans

ART in all its forms and shapes has made us understand the world that we live in, giving light to the many unanswered questions and issues that we continuously face as a growing planet. Used both as an expression and a tool, it has changed the way we perceive our surroundings, where in times of plight, has given color and life to a world ridiculed by the still dullness of monotony. Art is like the capricious ocean, a blank canvas facing us in its infinite horizon, an endless sea of possibilities, wherein its deeper meaning lies beneath its surface. Today, when the blue vivid tides and currents of our oceans are being repainted in streams and blots of plastic and pollution, art has given light to this tainted canvas, where struggle becomes an opportunity.

An opportunity for artists, scientists and creatives from different corners of this planet working together through their unique mediums and different palettes to fight this battle for the welfare of our beloved oceans. One is National



INTO THE WILD

GAB MEJIA

Geographic adventurer Emi Koch, who started Beyond Surface International (<https://www.beyondthesurfaceinternational.org/>), a non-profit organization that empowers local communities and small-scale fishing villages from the coasts of Chile all the way to the secluded islands of Indonesia, teaching the youth about plastic pollution and other coastal problems through the art of storytelling, and the sport of surfing. She says that, "Art is a powerful medium to promote ocean conservation that elicits an emotive response — something statistics or data alone often cannot. Art inspires stewardship through beautiful images or dramatic scenes that open our minds or remind us that our well-being and the ocean's are interlinked."

Uniquely, Julia Barton's Littoral Project (<https://littoralartproject.com/>),

which is an art-science driven project for the youth held across different schools in Scotland, creates artistic and scientific displays and exhibits in order to engage and initiate events with the Scottish parliament. Intended for policymakers to respond to the issue of plastic pollution and the degradation of our beaches, the Littoral Project bridges the gap between art and science for ocean conservation. Furthermore, the art of filmmaking where its relevance has significantly grown throughout the digital age, director Craig Leeson and his team have created the documentary film "A Plastic Ocean" (<https://plasticoceans.org/about-film/>), raising awareness and showing solutions to solve the plastic problem in different countries around the world. Also, Director Jeff Orlowski, through his documentary "Chasing Corals" (<https://www.chasingcoral.com/>), raises awareness of the different and relevant issues our ocean ecosystems and ecology are

currently facing like coral bleaching, rising ocean temperatures, and ocean acidification. Both illustrate the current problems and issues of our oceans, where through the art of film and cinema engages its audience to act on real positive change.

Different tides, but just one ocean — it is seen that art comes in different forms and works, but ultimately it will always be an important way for us to understand and transform the world in and around us. The artist Paul Klee once said, "Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible." For as we may already see the beauty and know the struggles of our oceans, the real change comes from its depths and brought forward to its horizon, where a blank canvas is still left in front of *all of us* to paint its future. Art, science, and whatever medium it may be, let it be our voice to fight the issues of our oceans!

Email: jgbmejia@gmail.com
Instagram: [@gabmejia](https://www.instagram.com/gabmejia)



A Smart employee plants a seedling during a tree planting activity on Mt. 387 in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija, in September 2018.

Smart, PSF recall 'Ondoy' devastation, hold nationwide tree planting

PLDT wireless unit Smart Communications led a nationwide tree planting activity on Sept. 26 to commemorate the 10th year since Tropical Storm "Ondoy" (international name: Ketsana) hit the Philippines and caused severe flooding, loss of lives, and damage to property.

The simultaneous tree planting initiative across the country is part of the #PlanetSmart initiative of PLDT and Smart, which aims to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by harnessing technology and promoting collective effort for environmental protection. It is also in line with the celebration of the World Environmental Health Day.

"Deforestation is one of the causes of flooding, and we saw that during Ondoy. The devastating floods opened the eyes of everyone to the importance of saving our forest cover, particularly in the Marikina Watershed," said Ramon Isberto, PLDT-Smart public affairs head.

PLDT-Smart employees and partners will conduct

simultaneous tree planting sessions in Marikina Watershed, Antipolo; Talavera Watershed, Carranglan, Nueva Ecija; and Cebu Hillyland, Cebu City; while volunteers will plant mangrove seedlings in Minanga, Buayan, General Santos City.

Smart has been planting trees since 2004 in an effort to offset its greenhouse gas emissions in its operations.

Together with various private collaborators, community stakeholders, school partners, and volunteers from PLDT-Smart and sister-companies, Smart has planted over one million seedlings and propagules in adopted planting sites, including Marikina Watershed and Ipo Watershed, Sasmuan Bangkung Malapad Critical Habitat and Eco-tourism Area, Calatagan, Subic, Mt. Banahaw, Puerto Princesa, and Calabanga in Camarines Sur in Luzon; Cebu, Olango Island, Negros Oriental and Occidental, Iloilo, Taklong Island National Marine Reserve, and Bohol in Visayas; and Misamis Oriental, Surigao, Zamboanga, Sarangani, Digos, Davao City, and Tawi-Tawi in Mindanao.



Flower Power

By ROBERT REQUINTINA

THE highly-anticipated beauty and environmental event of the year kicked off recently with a bouquet of fresh faces and its unrelenting stance to protect and preserve nature.

Close to 90 alluring delegates from all over the world touched down in Manila to take part in what could be one of the fiercest competitions in Miss Earth history.

Armed with passion and commanding presence, not to mention their ethereal beauties, this year's batch could definitely be considered as among the most competitive.

"Their striking physical attributes already make them a standout. And once you hear them speak their minds, they become even more attractive,"

said Carousel Executive Vice President Lorraine Shuck.

"They're like flowers that are about to bloom," Schuck added, referring to the floral-themed edition of Miss Earth.

For its 19th year, Miss Earth celebrates the flowers of the world. Known for symbolizing beauty, flowers also stand for purity and joy.

As each delegate showcases the national flower of her country, they bring with them a positive vibe and a message that nature can bloom once again if people would do their part to protect it.

More significantly, Miss Earth 2019 also promotes the #MEandmytreecampaign in light of the alarming natural calamities, particularly the burning of the Amazon, Borneo and the Africa rainforest which is considered as the lungs of the Earth.

Through the campaign, Miss Earth and its delegates encourage

people in different parts of the world to plant a tree within their surroundings to help alleviate the effects of these unfortunate incidents.

The four-week schedule of activities will see the delegates touring various parts of the country while promoting the pageant's cause.

Pre-pageant competitions are also lined-up, as well as the three rounds of preliminary judging that will determine which delegates will stand the chance to become the new environmental ambassador, said Carousel Vice President for Logistics Peachy Veneracion.

"It's going to be a hectic yet worthwhile month for the delegates. Competition aside, the whole process is a learning experience for these ladies. We hope that this year would be another memorable edition of Miss Earth," said Carousel President Ramon Monzon.

Miss Earth 2019 culminates on Oct. 26, telecast live on FoxLife, with a delayed local airing on Oct. 27 on ABS-CBN Sunday's Best.



MISS Earth 2019 candidates (AFP)



Miss Earth 2019 candidates

Miss Earth 2019 beauties, simula na ng pasiklaban

NI ROBERT REQUINTINA

FLOWER POWER para sa Miss Earth 2019!

Simula na ang inaabangang beauty at environmental event ng taon nitong Huwebes ng tanghali na may bouquet ng mga fresh faces at ang walang sawa nitong tindig na pagprotekta at pagpreserba sa kalikasan.

Nasa 90 nagagandahang kandidata mula sa buong mundo ang lumapag na sa Maynila upang makibahagi sa pinakamabangis na kumpetisyon sa kasaysayan ng Miss Earth.

Armado ng kagustuhan at presensya, hindi pa nababangit ang kanilang malaanghel na kagandahan, ang batch ngayong taon ay makukunsidera bilang pinaka-competitive.

"Their striking physical attributes already make them a standout. And once you hear them speak their minds, they become even more attractive," pahayag ni Carousel Executive Vice President **Lorraine Shuck**.

"They're like flowers that are about to bloom," dagdag pa ni Schuck, na may pagbanggit sa floral-themed edition ng Miss Earth.

Para sa ika-19 taon ng Miss Earth, ipagdiriwang nito ang mga bulaklak ng mundo. Kilala ito na simbolo ng kagandahan, sumisimbolo din ang bulaklak ng kadalisayan at kaligayahan.

Habang ipinapakita ng mga kandidata ang kanilang pambansang bulaklak, dala din nila ang positibong aura at mensahe na ang kalikasan ay maaari pang mamulaklak kung ang mga tao ay makikiisa sa

pagprotekta dito.

Mas mahalaga pa, isinusulong ng Miss Earth 2019 ang #MEandmytreecampaign bilang parte ng nakaka-alarmang mga natural na kalamidad, lalo na ang pagkasunog sa Amazon, Borneo at sa kagubatan ng Africa na kilala bilang baga ng mundo.

Sa pamamagitan ng kampanya, hinikiyat ng Miss Earth at ng mga kalahok dito ang lahat ng tao mula sa iba't ibang parte ng mundo na magtanim ng puno upang matulungang mabawasan ang epekto ng mga nakakalungkot na pangyayari.

Lilibot ang mga kandidata sa loob ng 4 na linggo ng mga aktibidad sa iba't ibang mga parte ng bansa habang ibinabahagi ang layunin ng paligsahan.

Nakalinya na din ang pre-pageant competitions, maging ang three rounds ng preliminary judging na aalam sa kung sinong kandidata ang may tsansang maging bagong environmental ambassador, pahayag ni Carousel Vice President for Logistics **Peachy Veneracion**.

"It's going to be a hectic yet worthwhile month for the delegates. Competition aside, the whole process is a learning experience for these ladies. We hope that this year would be another memorable edition of Miss Earth," ayon kay Carousel President **Ramon Monzon**.

Matatapos ang Miss Earth 2019 sa Sabado, Oktubre 26, na ipapalabas ng live sa FoxLife, na may delayed local airing sa Linggo, Oktubre 27 sa ABS-CBN Sunday's Best.