

DATE : 10-06-19

DAY : Sunday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## Cavaliers, Warriors remain undefeated

Defending champion Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) scored another breezy win while newcomer Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) continued to impress in the 8th UNTV Cup held recently at the Pasig City Sports Center.

Through the impressive quarterbacking of former Letran star and 2007 PH team member Boyet Bautista, the AFP Cavaliers smothered the SSS Kabalikat, 100-86, and stayed undefeated in Group I elims.

The DENR Warriors took the solo lead in Group II elims with an 88-77 win over former champion Philippine National Police Responders.

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Department of Agriculture rolled to its second win in Group 1 by beating PITC Global Traders, 68-64.



TITLE:

# Cavs, Warriors stay undefeated



**RALPH** Lansang of the DENR Warriors goes for a dunk during their recent game with the PNP Responders in the 8th UNTV Cup.

## Games Oct. 13

(Pasig City Sports Center)

2 p.m. – GSIS vs Malacañang-PSC

3:30pm – Ombudsman vs PhilHealth

5 p.m. – Judiciary vs NHA

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The DENR Warriors, on the other hand, took the solo lead in Group II elims with an 88-77 win over former champion Philippine National Police Responders.

DENR's victory only showed that its 101-98 decision over the GSIS Furies was no fluke.

Department of Agriculture rolled to its second win in Group 1 by slipping past the PITC Global Traders, 68-64, thanks to another solid game from former PBA player Emerson Oreta and Christian Dematera, who tallied 16 and 14 points, respectively.

Ralph Lansang starred once against for DENR by posting 21 points, eight rebounds and seven steals in a fitting follow up to his 51-point explosion in the team's opening game victory.

Led by former University of the East player Olan Omiping, the Responders took a 44-38 halftime lead, but were outscored in the third, 31-10, thus absorbing their second straight defeat.

### First game

**DENR 88** – Lansang 21, Bangal 21, Parreño 13, Rivera 11, Ayson 10, Gamboa 8, Atablanco 2, Abanes 2.

**PNP 77** – Omiping 20, Tolentino 14, Flormata 13, Villanueva 10, Cabrera 8, Elore 6, Decena 2, Misola 2, Nicolas 2.

Quarter s: 21-18, 38-44, 69-54, 88-77.

### Second Game

**AFP 100** – Zuffiga 18, Sergio 17, Casulla 10, Rosopa 9, Pascual 9, Almerol 8, Araneta 8, Evidor 7, Bautista 6, Fernandez 3, Cordero 3, Lumongsod 2.

**SSS 86** – Quiambao 41, Roman 16, Sarmiento 12, Guierrez 6, Paclibare 2, M. Rapadas 2, R. Zarraga 2, M. Hernandez 2, S. Trinidad 2, Puño 1.

Quarters: 28-19, 57-36, 81-53, 100-86.

### Third Game

**AGRICULTURE 68** – Dematera 16, Oreta 14, Silva 11, Casaysayan 10, Mastelero 8, Lim 6, Tayer 3.

**PITC 64** – Vasallo 13, Martin 13, Taplah 10, Porto 8, Regalado 6, Barbers 4, Gecale 4, Lopez 4, Juan 2.

Quarters: 12-10, 28-29, 39-45, 68-64.



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**FISH NOT.** Fishermen try their nets (topmost photo) for tiny shrimps at Manila Bay, known for its iconic and placid sunset, after the government, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources prohibited fishing along Manila Bay's shoreline, where toxic discharges have become an eyesore, while a couple of a hundred volunteers (above) and DPS Manila join in cleaning up the natural harbor which serves the Port of Manila.

**Norman Cruz**



# Novaliches locals welcome cleanup campaign

We cannot pass through the sidewalks in a wheelchair because the sidewalks in some areas are usually high and uneven, and sometimes blocked by posts

The recent clean-up campaign ordered by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has been welcomed by residents of Novaliches, the fifth congressional district of Quezon City.

In fact, residents in the area hope that the changes would continue after decades of seeming neglect from city hall.

Last 29 July, DILG Secretary Eduardo Año declared a 60-day deadline for local executives to clear streets, sidewalks and public parks of obstructions.

It was a direct result of the order of President Rodrigo Duterte to dismiss or suspend local government officials who fail to reclaim roads, sidewalks and other public spaces being used for private interests.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte took an active part in implementing the order.

In a statement issued on 29 September, Belmonte said, "Quezon City is 100 percent done in its clearing operations. For the past weeks, the QC local government, through its Task Force 60 Days, has been persistent in its efforts to comply with the rules of the DILG in this operation."

Meanwhile, DILG teams are now validating compliance of local government units nationwide to the President's order issued during the recent State of the Nation Address.

In the Novaliches area, first to be cleared were the sidewalks of Barangay Novaliches Proper, also known as the former Novaliches Poblacion or town proper.

Clearing of sidewalks along Gen. Luis Street leading to Valenzuela City, Susano Road heading to Camarin and other North Caloocan City areas, Buenamar Avenue, and Quirino Highway from Barangays Sta. Monica to Novaliches Proper took place after the mayor visited Novaliches on the evening of 30 July.

The clean-up campaign was done by a joint team led by QC traffic czar lawyer Ariel Inton, former 2nd District Councilor Rannie Ludovica, Department of Public Order and Safety, Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department, and Novaliches District Center in coordination with barangays Novaliches Proper and Sta. Monica officials.

A week later, the same team began dismantling the commercial stalls of numerous vendors who had occupied for more than 10 years the old Novaliches public plaza, depriving the local residents, especially the elderly, of their only place for leisure and recreational activities.

Also cleared of obstructions were the sidewalks of Ramirez, Austria, Sarmiento, Dumalay and Geronimo streets around the Novaliches Poblacion and the Diocesan Shrine and Parish of Our Lady of Mercy, as well as those in barangays Gulod, Sta. Lucia, San Bartolome, Bagbag, Kaligayahan, San Agustin, Pasong Putik, Greater Lagro, Fairview, North Fairview, Nagkaisang Nayon and Capri.

While the sidewalks have been cleared of vendors, Olivia Peralta Mananquil, a paraplegic who uses a wheelchair, complained that she and other people with disability

remain in constant danger of being hit by speeding motor vehicles while passing through Susano Road, Gen. Luis Street or Quirino Highway.

She said they are forced to travel along the street proper because their wheelchairs cannot be accommodated on the sidewalks, which have no adequate ramps. **JC**



## PHL to host 2nd East Asian-Australasian Flyway Congress

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**T**HE Philippines, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), led by its Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), will host the Second East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Congress for Wetlands and Migratory Waterbirds in the course of Climate Change, happening from October 7 to 11 at the L'Fisher Hotel in Bacolod City.

In 2014, the DENR-ERDB also spearheaded the First EAAF Congress in Cebu City which also convened participants from various countries within the EAAF.

In a statement, ERDB, the research and development arm of the DENR, said around 200 delegates from various countries—such as Russia, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, United States, Cambodia, Japan and Pakistan—will discuss recent research and development (R&D) on waterbirds and wetlands in the EAAF.

Dr. Simplicia A. Pasicolan, lead organizer of the event and chief science research specialist in Urban Ecosystems Research Division of ERDB, said four subthemes will be discussed during the Congress.

These are: 1) effects or impacts of climate change to wetlands and migratory waterbirds; 2) appropriate management strategies on

wetland habitat of waterbirds; 3) adaptable enabling instruments in protecting wetland habitats along flyway, and 4) frontline innovation and breakthroughs for sustainable urban future for people, wetlands and waterbirds.

Through the Congress, ERDB hopes to strengthen partnership among EAAF states through identification of R&D gaps and initiatives for the conservation of migratory birds and their wetland habitats in the face of climate change.

The EAAF, a route that supports migratory birds, is home to over 50 million migratory waterbirds from over 250 different populations.

It also includes 32 globally threatened species and 19 near-threatened species.

The Philippines serves as habitat to more than 80 species of migratory birds that visit the country every year.

“The growing demand of water for both humans and animals could lead to water shortage. This could lead to the need to look for alternative sources of water which could dry our wetlands which are essential for migratory birds,” Pasicolan said.

“With the devastating impacts of climate change, now more than ever, we need to work together toward the protection and conservation of these species and their habitats,” ERDB Director Sofio Quintana said.



# Endangered Sulu hornbills down to 27 in the wild

DAVAO CITY — Ecologists have launched a project to save the critically endangered Sulu hornbill (*Anthracoceros montani*), one of the world's rarest birds that can only be seen in the Bangsamoro province of Tawi-Tawi.

There are only about 27 mature Sulu hornbills left in the wild, according to a recent count of BirdLife International.

The project, which trains a spotlight on the biodiversity stock in the remaining forests of Tawi-Tawi, was launched recently in the town of Panglima Sugala in cooperation with the local governments and the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation (PBCF).

Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), said the project to save the Sulu hornbill was also aimed at establishing the bird's ecological links with other bird species in the region.

"Sulu hornbills have a genetic connection with other hornbills that can be found in other countries in Southeast Asia ... [By tapping] into Tawi-Tawi's biodiversity, [we] hope to gain a deeper understanding of the evolution of species in the rest of Asean," said Lim, who formerly headed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau.

More than 60 percent of the remaining forests in Tawi-Tawi are concentrated in Panglima Sugala, which is considered the home of the Sulu hornbill, said PBCF executive Lisa Paguntalan.

### 'Place of wonder'

Tawi-Tawi plays a vital role in Asean's efforts at biodiversity conservation as it lies along the borders of the faunal regions of the Philippines and Wallacea, Paguntalan said.

Located between Borneo Island in the west and the Indonesian province of Papua in the east, Wal-



lacea "is a place of wonder, a living laboratory for the study of evolution and a melting pot for faunal genetic diversity," Paguntalan said.

It was named after the 19th-century English explorer and naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace.

Tawi-Tawi is known to also host

terrestrial birds and endemic and migratory water birds, but little is known of these, Lim said.

She said ACB and PBCF would work with local governments in identified sites, line agencies, and schools and universities in Tawi-Tawi to monitor the threatened birds and their status in important forest and migratory sites.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Sulu hornbill, a nonmigratory bird, was "common to abundant in the late 19th century" and now persists with certainty only in Tawi-Tawi.

In an October 2016 assessment, IUCN expressed the suspicion that the species went through "a very rapid decline over the last 10 years" due to forest loss.

### Other threatened species:

Tawi-Tawi still hosts a number of bird species endemic to the Philippines and other Southeast Asian

countries, such as the Asian koel and mangrove blue-flycatcher, said University of the Philippines professor and bird curator Juan Carlos Gonzales.

Apart from the Sulu hornbill, among the threatened species found in Tawi-Tawi are the Christmas island frigate bird (*Fregata andrewsi*), Chinese egret (*Egretta eulophotes*), Great knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*), Sulu bleeding-heart (*Gallicolumba menagei*), and Tawi-Tawi brown dove (*Phapitreron cinereiceps*).

The others are Grey imperial-pigeon (*Ducula pickeringii*), Philippine spinetail (*Mearnsia picina*), Sulu boobook (*Ninox reyi*), Rufous-ored kingfisher (*Todiramphus winchelli*), Sulu pygmy woodpecker (*Picooides ramsayi*), Philippine cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*), Sulu racquet-tail (*Prioniturus verticalis*), Celestial monarch (*Hypothymis coelestis*) and Sulu bulbul (*Hypsipetes haynaldi*). — *Inquirer*



MASAYANG nagpakuha ng larawan ang mga bagong miyembro ng Pasay City Host Lions Club makaraang panumpain sila ni District 301-A2 Second Vice District Governor Ma. Jesusa Antiporda na sinaksihan nina Multiple District 301 Council Chair PID Michael So, District Gov. Wennie Bico, FVDG Usec. Benny Antiporda, GMT District Coordinator PDG Susan Rosanna Santillana, PCHLC President Lydia Bueno, PCHLC Sec. PP Dr. Lauro Feiciano at PP Alan Co sa ginanap na 70th Anniversary at 71st Induction Ceremonies ng PCHLC sa East Ocean Palace Restaurant kamakailan.





## Probe of Boracay dragon boat sinking sought

Lawmakers are seeking a congressional probe on the circumstances surrounding the death of seven members of the Boracay Dragon Force Team when their boat capsized off the island of Boracay last Sept. 25 during their training.

Aklan Rep. Carlito Marquez and Probinsyano Ako partylist Rep. Jose "Bonito" Singson Jr. filed House Resolutions No. 385 and 397, respectively, to look into tragedy met by the Boracay Dragon Force Team.

"A report released by the Office of the Municipal Mayor of Malay said all the victims were not wearing life vests at the time of the accident and that one of the victims does not know how to swim," Marquez said.

"Capt. Armand Balilo, Coast Guard spokesperson, confirmed that no one from the team wore life vest, clarifying that dragon boat training is not covered by

the agency's regulation on wearing life vests," he noted.

The seven victims, including three women, were training for the 2019 Kaohsiung City Cup international dragon boat championship from Nov. 8 to 10 in Taiwan.

"Considering that this is not the first time an incident involving waters sports have happened which resulted to death or incapacitation of our athletes, it is imperative that an investigation on the incident be conducted in order to come up with potential legislation aimed at providing safety regulation for athletes involved in extreme water sports," Singson said.

Citing reports, he said the members of the Boracay Dragon Force Team were practicing off Sitio Lingganay in Barangay Manoc-Manoc when their boat was hit by strong waves, causing it to tip over. **(Charissa L. Atienza)**



STRATEGIC  
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INITIATIVES  
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**Fairways & Bluewater handpicked by Condé Nast Johansens as one of the three top-rated luxury resorts in Boracay**

In 2018, Condé Nast crowned Boracay Island as one of the Best Islands in the World and Second Best Island in Asia. Now, Condé Nast Johansens welcomes Fairways & Bluewater Resort Golf and Country Club, Inc. to be included in its carefully curated and exclusive list of top-rated luxury hotels. Condé Nast is the prestigious and world-renowned London-based luxury and lifestyle publisher that has been the trusted reference and foremost legitimate guide for over 35 years for luxury hotels, resorts, spas and venues around the world akin to the Michelin Guide for the world's best restaurants.

Mr. Wilbur L. Chan, Chairman of Fairways & Bluewater, said "Condé Nast's inclusion of Fairways & Bluewater in their list is a stamp of excellence that inspires us to be the best that we can be all the time. We have a triple-ISO certification, among which are the Quality Management System and the Environmental Management System, that ensures the high quality of operations in the resort, and we have partnered with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to strengthen our environmental programs. Soon, we will launch our newest addition to our first-rate villas --- Villa Augusta houses 135 stylish, well-appointed rooms and suites, as well as our seventh swimming pool and largest natural vertical garden."

Fairways & Bluewater distinguishes itself on its own merit as the only homegrown world-class property to be chosen as a select luxury resort in the entire island alongside 2 other international 5-star brand resorts Shangri-la Boracay and Discovery Shores Boracay after a thorough review and inspection from Condé Nast's team of experts. There are thousands of establishments all over the world claiming to be of luxury status, but only 300+ have been certified and Fairways & Bluewater is now one of the 300+ certified in the world...not just in Boracay!



# Raps vs firm dropped over death of 45 trees

**BAGUIO CITY:** The City Prosecutor's Office, for lack of probable cause, dismissed the charges against a local corporation for violation of Republic Act (RA) 11038, or the "Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018" over the "sudden death" of 45 pine trees on its property.

In a 13-page resolution penned by Deputy City Prosecutor Conrado Catral Jr., it said that the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) was not able to present any evidence to warrant the filing of the case against the Gateluck Corporation and that there were no allegations in the complaint leading to the violation.

The CENRO charged the officers of Gateluck Corp. in their individual capacities because they allegedly had the insidious plan or motive to kill the 45 pine trees to realize their development plans. The trees, however, were found to be within the coverage of Proclamation 1754 or within the forest reservation along Marcos highway and their killing, referred to as native plants, violated the Nipas Law.

The resolution pointed out the Cenro could not adduce positive and categorical proof that any or all of the corporate officers had actual knowledge or participation in the acts of their employees, especially if they insisted that it was the company's employees who may have killed the pine trees.

"The evidence remains speculative and presumptuous at this stage, which cannot support a finding of probable cause," the resolution stressed.

The resolution explained that the person who ought to be made liable for the offense on the clustered death of the 45 pine trees and the Nipas Law would be the person who had poached, killed, destroyed, disturbed any wildlife, including within public lands in the protected areas.

The resolution said Cenro did not at all attribute any overt acts against any of the officers of the corporation that would indicate their participation in the acts complained of and that the recitals in the affidavit complaint and its annexes or the lack thereof were clear on the matter.

"True proof of identity need not always be based on direct evidence for it may likewise raise on purely circumstantial evidence. However, it has also been held that, as a rule of ancient respectability that has now been sculpted into tradition, conviction may be warranted on the basis of circumstantial evidence only upon concurrence to the requisites," the resolution stipulated.

Even if the prosecutor's office conceded that Gateluck's application for an excavation and ground preparation permit was an indication of a development plan, the resolution asserted that such facts could not lead to a definite conclusion that the corporation's officers bored the holes and introduced toxins on the trees.

The resolution emphasized "there was also absolutely no evidence on record that would show that the alleged development of the private property would require the cutting of trees at all, thus, it would be again speculative to state that the development plan constituted motive on the part of the corporation to cause damage to the said trees and it would also be speculation of a greater order to infer further from the inferred motive of the corporation that the officers were the authors of the crime.

The city prosecutor had claimed that the plain and simple conclusion that may be derived was that the private land subject of the present complaint was "beyond the jurisdiction of the Nipas Law thus, the present charges must therefore fail."

The resolution maintained that it was not actually the end of the prosecution to file charges against any respondent where the evidence was "insufficient, presumptuous or conjectural, and unclear, rather, the prosecution conducts investigations and resolve cases with the end that the innocent be freed from unjust accusations and charges."

"We are one with the local government and the Cenro in their efforts at enforcing the Environment Code, as well as our environmental laws and in punishing the appropriate persons who ought to be made responsible for its violation. But criminal and court actions are essentially and always concerned with the production of sufficient positive and appropriate evidence in support of the appropriate legal actions against the proper responsible malefactors, so that both the efforts of the concerned government agencies, the local government and the prosecutor's office will not prove futile," the resolution said.

The resolution reminded the Cenro to show "positive evidence to the point of moral certainty, that the violations of the Nipas Law were actually and personally performed by any of the officers of the corporation, to make any or all of them criminally liable, otherwise their evidence remain self-serving and purely speculative and presumptive in nature which are totally inadmissible in any proceeding for that matter."

The city prosecutor's officer also dismissed for lack of evidence and probable case the environmental case filed by the local government against the same corporation for violation of the provisions of Ordinance 18, series of 2016 or the city's Environment Code following the discovery of the 45 pine trees that were dying inside the corporation's private property along Legarda Road.

**DEXTER A. SEE**



# Solon wants tree-planting as prerequisite for graduation in college, high school

By **CHARISSA M. LUCI-ATIENZA**

A leader of the House of Representatives wants to require graduating college and senior high school students to plant two trees as prerequisite for graduation.

Baguio Rep. Mark Go, chairman of the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education, said by requiring all graduating high school and college students to plant two trees each, the country's forest stock will be augmented by around five million trees annually.

"As these college and senior high school graduates join the labor force, requiring them to participate in addressing a national concern that has a direct impact on them will instill upon the youth the value of public service and civic participation in whatever trade or employment they would soon join," he said.

The Forest Management Bureau (FMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) estimates a loss of about 47,000 hectares of forest cover in the Philippines annually, the House leader noted.

Go filed House Bill 4813 or the proposed "Graduating Students for Reforestation Act of 2019" to promote and pursue reforestation programs, and encourage tree-planting as a means of involving the youth in public and civic affairs.

"It is the purpose of the bill to involve the youth in addressing the country's dwindling forest stock, which is among our country's most pressing issues and which threatens the very future of our youth," he said.

"This is consistent with the constitutional recognition of the vital role of the youth in nation-building and the constitutional mandate of inculcating in them

patriotism and nationalism, and encouraging their involvement in public and civic affairs," he stressed.

House Bill 4813 provides that all graduating students from senior high school and college shall be required to plant at least two trees as a mandatory prerequisite for their graduation.

"Their tree-planting activity shall be their first act of public service as they enter the country's labor force," Go said.

The bill tasks the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to implement the provisions of the proposed Act, in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of the DENR, in partnership with the local government units (LGUs) shall maintain a seedling bank and will serve as ready source of seedlings to be provided to senior high schools, colleges and universities for the implementation of the proposed Act, Go's measure provides.

The DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the DENR and DILG, is expected to promulgate the implementing rules and regulations within 60 days after the approval of the proposed Act.

During the previous 17th Congress, the House of Representatives approved on third and final reading a bill requiring all graduating elementary, high school, and college students to plant at least 10 trees as a prerequisite for graduation.



# Land, forests and human survival

**G**lobalization is happening not just in the realm of the economy but also in ecology. Here, I use globalization in the sense of interconnectivity of causes, so that what happens in one corner of the world creates a chain of effects that ripple through our natural systems and daily existence.

Just in the last few weeks, the world has witnessed the burning of the Amazon forests, the world's largest tropical forest. As of the end of August, BBC reported that more than 450,000 hectares have gone up in flames. That is an area larger than the island of Luzon, and the fires are still burning. More than dry weather conditions, many are blaming intentional forest clearing for the unusually high frequency of fires this year. In other forests in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that are as globally important, more fires are burning but are not hitting the headlines. Closer to home, forests in Indonesia are ablaze again, dispersing haze to neighboring countries.

Why are the Amazon forests important? For one, they are the habitat of thousands of plants and animal species, a veritable biodiversity treasure trove. Just as important, when forests are burned

## COMMENTARY

RODEL D. LASCO

they emit huge amounts of greenhouse gases (GHG), the gases responsible for warming our planet. According to the BBC, this year's fires have released almost 230 megatons of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. That is more than the entire GHG emissions of the Philippines for a year.

This delicate relationship between land management and climate change could not have been made more salient than by the recently released special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in August, which highlights the critical role of forestry, agriculture and other land-use changes in mitigating climate change, since they are responsible for almost a quarter of all GHG emissions. Reforestation helps reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, because trees capture carbon in their woody biomass. On the other hand, land-based activities are crucial in providing food and other necessities for a rapidly developing world. These

activities can also help people adapt better to a changing climate.

It is at these critical junctures that I further the notion of globalization as the sense of intercollectivity in crafting solutions. The need to address these issues that affect the entire planet must range from individual resolutions to international cooperation. We are one people living in one planet. The word ecology comes from the Greek word *oikos*, which means "home." All of humanity live in one house, and all humans are both privileged and burdened that their actions can shape the destiny of our home planet.

Our planet is changing at an unprecedented rate. We can ignore the signs around us and suffer the consequences. Or we can act accordingly. There is no easy way. Let us make the right decisions for the sake not just of our generation, but also of those to come.

Dr. Rodel D. Lasco is an author of several IPCC reports, including the forthcoming sixth assessment report. He is the executive director of The OML Center, a foundation devoted to discovering climate change adaptation solutions (<http://www.omlopezcenter.org/>).

## BREAKTHROUGH

ELFREN S. CRUZ

### Metro Manila and Davao are sinking



According to a 2012 study by the Asian Development Bank, the Philippines is one of five countries most affected by climate changes in the world. The biggest threat is the accelerating rise of sea levels. This will affect almost the whole population because most of the population live near water. The Philippines is made up of more than 7,100 islands with one of the longest coast line in the world – some 37,000 kilometers.

Another geographic feature that makes the Philippines vulnerable to rising sea levels is that the islands are mostly flat and the bays reach far inland. This is one reason the cities of Metro Manila, Legazpi, Cagayan de Oro and Davao have become areas where sea levels have risen faster than the rest of the country. According to a UN world climate report, higher levels in the bays will mean that typhoons will do more damage. The United Nations World Climate Council says that sea level rise could disrupt crop growth and flood rice and corn fields which could spread dengue fever through the standing water in those fields. Areas that never experienced major floods before will now be vulnerable because of this rise in sea levels.

Jakarta, Bangkok, Shanghai and Manila were listed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as among the fastest sinking metropolises in the world. A World Bank study predicted that 40% of Bangkok may be submerged by 2030 and risks being totally submerged in 15 years if nothing is done.

Along Manila Bay, the provinces of Pampanga and Bulacan have sunk between four and six centimetres annually since 2003. By comparison, the UN estimates that the average rise in sea level globally is about three millimetres per year. In Metro Manila one other cause for rise in water levels is the volume of groundwater being pumped out from below, often unregulated wells for homes, factories and farms catering to a booming population and growing economy. Today, many homes build private swimming pools and water pumps adding to the looming crisis. Already thousands of people in the coastal towns north of Manila have been forced to permanently leave as the bay water has moved further inland.

For example, in Sitio Pariahan, the children used to be able to walk to school and the community chapel. Today, they have to ride a boat to go to the community chapel and commute for 20 minutes, also by boat, to a school further inland.

Jakarta is sinking 25 cm. a year and the metropolis is also prone to floods due to subsidence, caused by millions of residents using groundwater.

The three main reasons global warming causes global level to rise are: oceans expand, ice sheets lose ice faster than it forms from snowfall, and glaciers at higher altitudes also melt. The rise in sea level since the start of the 20th century has been dominated

by retreat of glaciers and expansion of the ocean. However, the melting of ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland is expected to increase this century.

Most of the additional heat trapped in the Earth's climate system by global warming is stored in the oceans. When the ocean gains heat, the water expands and sea level rises. For each degree, warmer water and water under great pressure expand more than cooler water and water under lesser pressure. This means that cold Arctic Ocean water will expand less compared to warm tropical water.

In September 2019, the IPCC published a report stating that if humanity will drastically reduce Greenhouse gas emission in the next decades, the problem will be tough but manageable. If the rise in emission will continue the problem will become unmanageable. Among climate scientists, there is a consensus that substantial long-term sea level rise will continue for centuries to come even if the temperature stabilizes.

If the rise of sea levels is inevitable, there are generally three ways nations can prepare to adapt: *retreat, accommodate, protect*. Retreat means moving people and infrastructure to less exposed areas and preventing further development in areas that are at risk. Accommodate means making societies more flexible to sea level rise. Examples are the cultivation of food crops that tolerate a high salt content in the soil or grains, like rice, that can grow even if entirely submerged in water. Building standards can also require buildings to be built higher. Protect means building infrastructure intended to keep flood waters out.

Some countries have already begun to prepare for the rise in sea level. Netherlands, a country that is 40 percent below sea level and is subsiding has unveiled a plan that would include more than \$118 billion in new spending to implement precautionary measures such as broadening coastal dunes and strengthening sea and river dikes.

Last May 2019, Indonesia's President Widodo declared that the city of Jakarta is sinking to a degree that required them to move the city to East Borneo, another island. Singapore has launched a scheme to increase the city's absorption capacity by natural means, by converting canals and reservoirs into streams and lakes and by creating wetlands and other spaces designed to flood. Swamps can absorb potentially ruinous floods while mangrove forests can protect cities near the coast from surges.

The Philippines is at the beginning stage of a national crisis which the nation should acknowledge before it is too late.

Creative writing classes  
for kids and teens

Young Writers' Hangout on Oct. 19 (1:30 pm-3 pm; stand-alone session) at Fully Booked BGC. For details and registration, email [writethingsph@gmail.com](mailto:writethingsph@gmail.com).

Email: [elfrencruz@gmail.com](mailto:elfrencruz@gmail.com)





# Why climate change is the new normal

Here's a practical checklist to mitigate its worst effects for future generations

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When my family moved to our new home in Alabang in 1991, we enjoyed the nightly spectacle of fireflies glowing in our garden. I soon learned that these beneficial insects were extremely sensitive to environmental conditions and could thrive only in a healthy habitat.

When they completely disappeared after a few years, I found out that many firefly species, of which there were more than 2,000, were actually in danger of extinction due to human activity.

We humans have also been responsible for a more serious phenomenon which today poses the biggest threat to our own species and other life forms on our planet. Global climate change is today's stark reality. It is the new normal, and is expected to only get worse over time.

With unprecedented heat waves and cold spells, extreme weather disturbances, droughts, floods, uncontrolled forest fires, food and water shortages, resurgent diseases and a host of other climate-related crises around the world, only the most naive,

the most selfish and the most callous remain in denial. The great irony is that while nature always survives and heals itself eventually, many of today's life forms, including humans, have become endangered, and some may not survive.

## Gravely wounded planet

Our generation will not see the worst of this unfolding tragedy, but our more immediate descendants will bear the brunt of it. That the next generation is seriously concerned about inheriting a gravely wounded planet was dramatically manifested last September when millions of citizens from some 150 countries, led by students, gathered in thousands of locations and held numerous strikes protesting climate change, citing countries most responsible and condemning the lack of effective action from world leaders.

These protests were timed immediately before the United Nations Climate Action Summit held on Sept. 21-25.

"How dare you!" Greta Thunberg, 16-year-old Swedish student activist and the face of the youth in the ongoing battle against climate change, em-

phatically rebuked world leaders during the summit, accusing them of continuous inaction on the crisis despite scientific evidence of its threat to the future and the youth.

She continued, "People are suffering, people are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy-tales of economic growth."

Sadly, many adults today are still only vaguely aware or worse, hardly concerned about the disastrous long-term effects of climate change on human quality of life and survival. Here's a brief review:

Man's heavy use of fossil fuels (petroleum, coal, natural gas) to generate energy and electricity for residential, commercial and industrial use results in the emission of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, fluorocarbons, etc.) which in turn cause the earth's surface temperature to rise (global warming). This is the driver of climate change, manifested by various environmental disruptions, especially in the weather.

Recent examples are record-breaking temperatures (90 degrees in usually cold Anchorage,

heat waves causing fatalities in major European cities, e.g. 108 degrees in Paris), accelerated melting of glaciers and rising sea levels, which will eventually inundate low-lying cities and islands.

Extreme weather events (hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes) are also becoming common; droughts and floods cause food scarcity, forcing many to migrate and become climate refugees. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 18 of the 19 warmest years ever recorded have occurred since 2000 (cited figures are from an article in the Los Angeles Times in google.com).

## Too late

Although it's too late to avert or reverse climate change, the consensus is that we can still mitigate its worst long-term consequences if we act individually and collectively (official local and international action and private advocacy initiatives).

To do our share, I sifted through hundreds of suggestions in various internet sites, and I have culled what I believe are the most practical (and com-



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mon) ones we can do here starting now:

Use less electricity at home. This is probably the most important single action you can take. If enough homes used less electricity, the decreased collective demand to generate it will mean less greenhouse gases released in the atmosphere.

Buy inverter appliances, i.e. air conditioners, refrigerators and freezers. You help the environment while you save money by cutting electrical consumption by 30 to 50 percent; unplug electronic devices (TV, PC), switch off lights when not in use; buy energy-saver light bulbs; install solar panels; hang-dry laundry instead of using the dryer whenever possible; insulate your home.

Travel wisely—buy a hybrid car for your next vehicle; take public transportation whenever practical (a friend, the president of a major bank, regularly takes the P2P bus to and from Makati); car-share/ride-share; fly less (with the travel and tourism boom, this one will probably fall on deaf ears, but think how many thousands of car trips will equal the emissions from 1,000-mile jumbo-jet airplane trip).

Avoid using plastic products as much as possible. Plastic is made from fossil fuels and is very durable, making plastic waste a major pollutant to the environment.

Reduce your digital footprint. Instead of repeatedly streaming your favorite online programs, download them; erase obsolete content and emails from your computer.

Eat more climate-friendly meals—eat less meat, especially beef, because cows are a major source of methane gas emission in the atmosphere; eat more organically grown vegetables and fruits.

Conserve water. Turn off the faucet when you're not actually using it, while taking a bath, washing up or brushing your teeth; buy water-saving bathroom and kitchen fixtures.

Plant trees. The recent wildfires in the Amazon jungle and Indonesia and the frequent ones in the United States not only deplete the world's oxygen producing forests, but are a major source of warming air pollution.

Vote for political candidates committed to climate-friendly measures and legislation.

—CONTRIBUTED INQ.





# From Russia with nuke plant plans

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MOSCOW—The Philippines has signed up with Russia's state nuclear company to look into the feasibility of buying into its newly launched "floating nuclear power plant" technology.

During the Philippine-Russia Business Forum where President Duterte spoke on Friday, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi signed a memorandum of intent with Rosatom Overseas president Evgeny Pakermanov "to jointly explore the prospects of cooperation in the construction of nuclear power plants in the Philippines."

The local news agency RIA Novosti reported the signing of the agreement, quoting Rosatom's chief executive officer Alexei Likhachev as saying that Russia had proposed to build a

floating nuclear power plant in the Philippines.

The Philippine side has yet to release details about the agreement.

As early as 2016, President Duterte has expressed openness to adopting nuclear energy, including the possible revival of the controversial Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP).

In an interview last year, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said nuclear energy is "something we should really consider."

Both Dominguez and Mr. Duterte had emphasized the need to ensure safety.

### Invitation to 'build'

In his speech at Friday's forum, Mr. Duterte invited Russian business leaders "to participate in [his administration's] massive 'Build, Build,

Build' infrastructure program, especially in transport and railway construction where Russia has high expertise."

He said the Philippines would soon introduce more of its food products to the Russian market

### Shadow of BNPP

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez signed several memoranda of understanding seeking to promote economic partnerships between Moscow and Manila.

He said the Philippines is encouraging investments in pharmaceuticals, chemicals, aerospace and aviation, energy, oil and gas, agri and industrial machineries, and shipbuilding, among other industries.

The Philippines' only foray into nuclear energy, the BNPP, fizzled out amid controversies



Alfonso Cusi

regarding the plant's location as well as corruption issues hounding the Marcos regime's deal with Westinghouse Electric Co., the party that took over General Electric in the \$2.2-billion project.

Amid these concerns, Mar-

cos' successor, Corazon Aquino, shelved the project indefinitely in 1986, the year of the Chernobyl tragedy.

But Manila continued to pay for the foreign loans that funded the power plant years after the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution that toppled Marcos.

There have since been several proposals to use nuclear energy to answer the country's increasing demand for power, including the revival of the mothballed plant.

But these plans have been met with opposition from several groups who again cited safety and environmental issues. Such fears resurfaced following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster caused by a magnitude-9 earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan's northeastern coast.

Russia launched its pio-

neering nuclear power vessel, the Akademik Lomonosov, in late August. The ship began sailing on Aug. 23 through the Arctic on its way to Russia's Chukotka region off the Bering Strait across Alaska.

### Explosion, fire

The launch was held in the wake of the Aug. 8 explosion at a naval test range in the Russian city of Archangelsk that killed five nuclear engineers, and the July 1 fire that hit the Russian nuclear submarine Losharik, killing 14 sailors.

Environmental activist group Greenpeace warned that the Akademik Lomonosov may lead to a "Chernobyl at sea," but Russia's Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corp. maintained that the ship's technology is safe. —WITH A

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