

DATE : 10-10-19

DAY : Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Nuclear industry: Allow us to combat climate change

By **Ronnel W. Domingo**
@RonWDomingoINQ

As the Department of Energy (DoE) reaffirmed a pact with Russia to explore joint efforts related to nuclear power in the Philippines, the World Nuclear Association (WNA) asked governments worldwide to allow the industry and its low-carbon feature to contribute in the fight against climate change.

WNA director general Agneta Rising said in a statement the nuclear industry was committed to "delivering what it needs to do to save our planet from climate change."

"Our technology is ready, our supply chain is ready and our people are ready," Rising said.

Her statement was addressed

to the Austria-based International Atomic Energy Agency, which reported to the United Nations and which earlier this week held an International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power.

According to the WNA, nuclear power avoids the emission of more than 2,500 million metric tons of carbon dioxide every year when compared to fossil fuels. The number is equivalent to the emissions of about 400 million cars.

"Nuclear reactors are the low-carbon backbone of the electricity system, operating in the background, day in and day out," Rising said. "Often out of sight and out of mind, they are the silent giants we rely upon daily."

"Governments are called upon

to take action to allow the nuclear industry to deliver the Harmony goal, so that the world can meet the climate challenge," she added.

"Harmony" refers to the WNA's program, which has the goal of providing at least one-fourth of the world's electricity supply before 2050.

Over the weekend, Trade Secretary Ramon López announced during President Duterte's visit to Russia that the DoE signed with Rosatom Overseas a memorandum of intent "to jointly explore the prospects of cooperation in the construction of nuclear power plants in the Philippines."

Rosatom Overseas is part of the state-run Rosatom State Corp. Group.

In November 2017, the DOE signed with Rosatom State Atomic

Energy Corp. a memorandum of cooperation (MOC), which the former said "will enable the country to come up with national policies for the development of safe and secure power generation practices through nuclear energy."

The MOC also covered the "audit and assessment of the [Bataan Nuclear Power Plant or BNPP's] technical condition, including the option of its rehabilitation."

In December 2018, following an eight-day mission of a multinational team to review the Philippines' nuclear industry, the International Atomic Energy Agency said the review "marked the readiness of the [Philippines] to make a knowledgeable commitment to a nuclear power program." INQ



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

10-10-19

FILE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

SOLUTION TO CLIMATE EMERGENCY? CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY

CLIMATE change is not an issue separate from biodiversity loss, as one inevitably affects the other.

Forest loss over the past decades has dramatically enhanced the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, leading to increased global temperature and heat waves.

The illegal, uncontrolled use and blasting of marine habitats such as mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs have also resulted in the massive decline of fish catch, and degraded ecosystem benefits such as carbon sequestration and flood protection. Efforts toward cli-

mate change adaptation and mitigation and the protection and conservation of biodiversity must then be looked at inter-dependently.

Ecosystem services from biodiversity are key to eliminating greenhouse gases and protecting communities from fatal climate change impacts such as flash floods and storm surges. Moreover, engineering renewable sources of human subsistence will also help sustain ecosystems and biodiversity for years to come.

Despite existing policies and localization efforts, the country must expedite the ef-

fective implementation of concrete environmental solutions to meet the bar. Our commitments in international pacts, such as the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, demand double the time for our institutions to operationalize and fund conservation programs.

We are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction, as teen climate activist Greta Thunberg puts it. Our ecosystems and biodiversity are greatly vulnerable to climate change. This makes our efforts to conserve and protect

the environment and everything that lives in it more relevant than ever.

Ecosystem services are our strongest hope to effectively curb the devastating effects of climate change. Our constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is founded on our basic human needs such as air, water, food, shelter and clothing—all generously provided by ecosystems.

As a response to the climate issue, Haribon Foundation and its partners are advocating for a sustainable forest management law. The proposed bill is undoubtedly the

overarching policy solution for a viable forest ecosystem, as it spotlights forest protection and reforestation as the front solutions to respond to the climate change issue and the need for the conservation of biodiversity.

We are also calling on decision-makers at all levels to establish, strengthen and sustain conservation efforts, explore sustainable livelihood programs, and continue to raise awareness about coastal and marine management.

HARIBON FOUNDATION,
Quezon City



TITLE:

PAGE 17

DATE

Eco-literacy could help check climate change

Can climate change be addressed through the integration of values into the lifestyle of every Filipino?

The Holy Angel University (HAU) in Angeles City, Pampanga, and the UNESCO-Asia Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (APNIEVE) Philippines believe so.

And the key phrase is ecological literacy, which promotes the idea of improving the environment by advocating a shift in mindset that prioritizes waste reduction.

It starts by building partnerships with the public schools in Pampanga.

The group sought to influence more learning communities by directly engaging the different Schools Divisions in Central Luzon, starting with the Schools

Divisions of Angeles City, City of San Fernando and Mabalacat City.

And APNIEVE has expressed support for eco-literate programs through training, benchmarking and service-learning in schools, including the engagement of different sectors, and sharing of best practices on sustainable development as developed and implemented in HAU, Miriam College and other UNESCO-APNIEVE member institutions.

"We can start in our own little ways, by going micro," said Alma Natividad, dean of the HAU College of Education.

Globalization has made today's people highly consumerist and heavily dependent on digital technology, in effect losing appreciation of nature and its processes.

According to Rhoda Santillan-

Tayag, project proponent, to have an eco-literate lifestyle is a step to reducing the world's issues.

"When we become eco-literate, we become more responsive to the conditions of our environment," Tayag pointed out.

"The problems of the world today are systemic, what we wear, what to eat, thus the need to be practical and minimalistic," Tayag shared.

Meatless days are also identified as a means to address climate change.

"There is a link between meals, deforestation and global warming. Changing our diet can help fight climate change," Tayag suggested.

A United Nations report revealed that the cattle industry, annually contributes an estimated 7.5 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

"That is why to understand one's place is to understand one's self. And to reduce meat consumption is a big step towards realizing this," Tayag explained.

Among the priority goals for UNESCO-APNIEVE, eco-literacy is aligned with education for sustainable development.

"It (eco-literacy) is also an important component for citizenship education in all sectors," said Lourdes Quisumbing-Baybay, president of UNESCO-APNIEVE Philippines.

- Rex San Diego



Climate activists block roads, camp out in global protests

LONDON – Hundreds of climate change activists camped out in central London on Tuesday during a second day of world protests by the Extinction Rebellion movement to demand more urgent actions to counter global warming.

Determined activists glued themselves to the British government's Department of Transport building as police working to keep streets clear appealed to protesters to move to Trafalgar Square.

Cities in Australia, elsewhere in Europe and other parts of the world also had climate change protests for a second day.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson appealed Monday to the protesters to stop blocking London's streets. He called the activists "uncooperative crusties" who should abandon their "hemp-smelling bivouacs."

Mike Gumn, 33, a National Health Service manager with two children, said he used a day of annual leave so he could attend the demonstration. Gumn, of Bristol, took umbrage at

Johnson's characterization of climate change activists as "hippies."

"I want to make a statement that (the activists) are all different sorts of people from all different walks of life, not just people you would call hippies," he said.

Authorities arrested 319 people at the London protests on Monday.

Disruption continued in other major cities. In Brisbane, Australia, protesters chained themselves to intersections in the city center and three people locked themselves onto barrels filled with concrete. A protester hanging from a harness beneath Brisbane's Story Bridge and brandishing "climate emergency" flags was taken into police custody and charged with unregulated high-risk activity.

Queensland police confirmed 29

people – ranging in age from 19 to 75 – were arrested in the city, and six others were arrested in Sydney after lying in a downtown street intersection.

More than 100 protesters dressed as bees at Sydney's Hyde Park to highlight their claim that insects are under threat due to the impact of humans on the environment.

Some activists camped at Melbourne's Carlton Gardens overnight before marching to a street corner locked down by more than 100 protesters in inclement weather. Police arrested 59 people for blocking an intersection.

"I don't know that shutting the city down necessarily wins you many friends," Victoria premier Daniel Andrews said.

In Perth, about 50 protesters converged outside the offices of *The West Australian*, the city's daily newspaper. The front page of Tuesday's paper was left intentionally blank for protesters to use as a placard.

Founded in Britain last year, Extinction Rebellion has chapters in some 50 countries and wants to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2025.

On Monday, activists with the movement stopped traffic in European cities and smeared themselves and emblems of Wall Street in fake blood and lay in New York streets.

In Berlin, 300 people blocked Potsdamer Platz, placing couches, tables, chairs and flowerpots on the road. They earlier set up a tent camp outside German Chancellor Angela Merkel's office out of dissatisfaction with her government's climate policy.

Merkel's chief of staff, Helge Braun, criticized the group's tactics.

"We all share an interest in climate protection, and the Paris climate targets are our standard in this," he told ZDF television. "If you demonstrate against or for that, that is OK. But if you announce dangerous interventions in road traffic or things like this, of course that is just not on." – AP



We need to talk (again) about CLIMATE CHANGE



Write about climate change

Dr. Crispin C. Maslog, author and columnist at SciDev.Net, explains to participants, composed of campus journalists and school paper advisers, how to report on climate change in the talk 'Engaging Various Stakeholders in the Climate Crisis' held during the 16th Word Cup in Subic. (Photo by Jimmy A. Domingo)



House panel ready to exercise oversight function on climate change laws

By **BEN ROSARIO**

Citing the urgency of addressing the worsening effects of climate change in the country, the chairman of the House Special Committee on Climate Change has declared that it has become imperative for Congress to exercise its oversight function over the implementation of climate change laws.

During a recent committee meeting, Bohol Rep. Edgar Chatto aired this legislative move as the Climate Change Commission warned that extreme weather conditions and temperatures are being anticipated by the end of the century.

Chatto said the implementation by the Climate Change Commission of its climate change adaptation and mitigation program will have to be re-examined to determine whether new laws must be passed to help ensure that the country will be able to dodge or slow down the disastrous effects of climate change.

Chatto underscored the urgency of

exercising legislative oversight over various programs and laws aimed at addressing climate change as experts warned that deleterious effects of the weather phenomena cannot be avoided if actions taken by government are slow or ineffective.

CCC Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, who briefed climate change panel about its plans and programs, disclosed that the Philippines has been "at the receiving end of the effects of climate change for the past several years now.

De Guzman recommended the initiation of a national policy on climate change and mitigation updated lawmakers on the cooperative action of the international community in battling the effects of climate change.

The CCC chief told lawmakers that Philippines must play an active part in international climate change negotiations to safeguard the country's interest and help ensure support from developed countries.

Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda backed the congressional move to guarantee stricter implementation of the country's climate change laws and policies.

In the same committee meeting, Legarda underscored the importance of the 1.5°C long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement.

The former senator explained that the 1.5°C goal is the global warming threshold that will enable vulnerable developing countries like the Philippines to survive and thrive.

In a privilege speech delivered earlier, Legarda said Congress has the responsibility to "lead our nation to a more sustainable and climate-resilient path."

"We need to ensure that climate action is embedded in the country's long-term development strategies. We also need to carry out immediate risk-informed and science-based adaptation interventions in the most climate vulnerable communities," she said.



Take the first step

Numerous national and international interventions have been proven to be inadequate in reversing the devastating effects of climate change.

Climate change has been a roundabout topic that it has already become a staple on newspapers and campus publications. And most of these articles focus on one topic – the ‘blame game.’

Humans are not off the hook when it comes to climate change. It’s an inherent fact that we are at fault here.

This is not a matter of judging who is to blame.

It’s a matter of do, don’t, or die.

In his talk, climate change resource speaker and author of 31 books, Dr. Crispin Maslog, shared his insights and expertise on climate change.

Maslog encouraged the young journalists to use the ‘power of the pen’ in combating climate change.

“Be involved, take it as an issue, and write in publications,” Maslog said.

Actions speak louder than words. It is an adage that has continued to prove that it is easier said than done.

Everybody should take part in alleviating and eventually eliminating this global crisis. It is never enough to pinpoint the root cause of all of these.

Words are empty if not coupled with the right actions.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

We already know what needs to be done. We have to act now and save the planet. Take the first step.

Lansang is a school paper adviser of Columban College (Barretto campus) in Zambales



Climate action now

By **JOHN RYAN M. JACOT**

Worsening global temperatures. Rising sea levels. Melting ice sheets. Blazing forest fires. The signs of an environmental crisis called climate change are around us and its effects create a colossal impact that continues to rock the ecological sphere and disrupt the dynamics of ecosystems.

Urban and industrial traditionalists assert that climate change action is a mere obstacle to the advancement of urban hubs that would improve the quality of life, raise income levels, and develop business activities.

However, despite the fruits of industrial development, ecological sustainability continues to be compromised which further worsens the damage caused by climate change.

For instance, a 2019 United Nations report concluded that the world's oceans and ice sheets are under distress with fish populations already declining in many regions. Its fallout would be difficult to contain without immediate and sustained ecological action.

In addition, a 2018 report from PAGASA revealed that there will be an increase in annual mean temperature which shows a large amount of warming year per year. This change is being driven by increased carbon dioxide and other human-made emissions.

The global effects of climate change can be seen in the increase of sea levels where 25 cities are found to be highly vulnerable to a one-meter sea level rise. According to a 2017 study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this will

'Come together because your future is at risk. If we take action now, we can work together toward ensuring that our future and the future of the next generation will be safe.'

"effectively flood cities around the world."

The excuses made against climate change are heavy chains that entangle communities as the world seeks for ecological sustainability.

Stakeholders of the environment - civic groups, the government, and all of us - should pool resources toward promoting simple yet dynamic ways to address climate change as anchored in the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change.

It is best for everyone to answer the call of environmental action now, not later. Let us take it from the words of Sealitel Patino from the Climate Change Commission, who said: "Come together because your future is at risk. If we take action now, we can work together toward ensuring that our future and the future of the next generation will be safe."

Are you ready to take action now?

Jacot, 18, is a HUMSS student at the Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepcion in Mandaue, Cebu



Go Green, send us an email: EnvironmentMB@gmail.com

EDITOR'S NOTE

During the Tolly Word Cup held in Cubao, campus journalists and school paper advisers, all over the country converged to learn about journalism and broadcasting, and to listen to experts on various topics such as mental health and climate change. After the talk, participants were enjoined to submit an article on their reaction on climate change. Here are two of the best ones. — **Johannes L. Chua**

No one is spared

By **JONATHAN B. EMMANUEL**

Climate change is inevitable to ignore. It is no longer an abstract scenario of the future. We feel it now. We see it now. With urgency, we are now doing tangible actions to act now, with efforts on combating climate change on a global scale.

A lot of people say they are aware about climate change, but sadly, most if not all, actually only know little about it.

With overwhelming scientific evidences, reports, and data revealing extreme weather, record-breaking temperatures, melting glaciers, we tend to just submit ourselves at the mercy of nature. Well, perhaps not anymore especially in the case of the Philippines.

According to Slettiel Patiño from the Climate Change Commission, under the Paris Agreement,

'Climate change is inevitable to ignore. It is no longer an abstract scenario of the future. We feel it now. We see it now.'

the Philippines has committed to cut green house gas emission by 70 percent by 2030.

"The commission is doing extensive information campaigns using all media platforms, symposia, and trainings on the effects of climate change, and to also relay things which can be done to deal with this issue," he said.

Scientists also suggest with certainty that the issue must be addressed in bigger perspective to gain global attention. Climate change must be given optimum attention, more than anything else.

Without doubt, the issue now is beyond the use of fossil fuel, industrial revolution, levels of carbon dioxide nor heat-trapping gases and global temperatures. The argument now must be beyond the portals of forests burning, coral reefs dying, and water supplies shrinking.

It is about finding tangible and sustainable mechanisms to stop the damage. We need to act together as one. We need to do it now - faster and braver - because no one is spared. Remember, we can fight climate change. We are the world's greatest resource.

Emmanuel has 10 years of experience in advising school papers. He is currently teaching at Koronadal National Comprehensive High School



Loren calls for climate action

CITING environmental problems, a House leader urged the government to strictly adapt Climate Change laws and policies.

Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda said the government should ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation is mainstreamed in its policies, plans, and programs.

Legarda, an environmental champion, stressed on the importance of achieving the 1.5°C long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement.

The three-term senator said that the 1.5°C goal is the global warming threshold that will enable vulnerable developing countries like the Philippines to survive and thrive.

"It is our obligation to lead our nation to a more sustainable and climate-resilient path. We need to ensure that climate action is embedded in the country's long-term development strategies. We also need to carry out immediate risk-informed and science-based adaptation interventions in the most climate vulnerable communities," she added.

Jester Manalastas



Learn what PH is doing vs. climate change

Participants of the 16th Word Cup interview Sealtiel Patiño (seated) of the Climate Change Commission to clarify how the Philippines which contributes a meager 0.12 percent compared to China's 26 percent and the US's 16 percent of greenhouse gas emissions can reduce it further by more than half without sacrificing industrial growth. Countries are racing against time to limit rising global temperatures due to the greenhouse effect. Breaching the additional two-degree threshold can lead to irreversible threat of sea level rise of close to one meter due to the unabated melting of polar ice. **(Photo by Eugenio Amado Noel C. Calapit III of Makati Science High School)**



UN climate summit proves a failure; UN running out of funds

First word

THE latest news on the climate front is not good for the climate alarmist agenda.

First, Politico reports that the recent United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York City, which convened on September 23, proved to be a failure.

Second, it is reported by the IANS (Indo-Indian News Service) that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is warning that the UN could run out of funds by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, the open letter to the UN of 500 scientists and professionals, which declared that "there is no climate emergency," has gathered steam in many countries and all continents. The ranks of signatories have swelled.

Lackluster summit

Here is its Politico's report, as posted on its website:

"There were low expectations going into the UN climate summit. They ended up being pretty accurate.



OBSERVER

**YEN
MAKABENTA**

"Despite fiery words from UN Secretary-General António Guterres and climate campaigner Greta Thunberg, the pledges made in New York didn't amount to any kind of a climate revolution.

"More than 60 countries did commit to the target of becoming climate-neutral by 2050 — one of the goals set for the summit by Guterres, but the biggest polluters ended up with a case of stage fright.

"Guterres had hopes of getting countries to commit to phasing out new coal-fired power plant construction by 2020 and bolstering national plans to cut emissions.

"The European Union, which sees itself as a global climate leader, was unable to make the mid-century climate neutrality pledge — four of its 28 member

countries blocked the target, fearful of the economic cost of a rapid cut in emissions.

"China, the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide, made no new promises in New York, but it did take a jab at US President Donald Trump, who has called climate change a 'hoax,' and signaled the US would exit the Paris climate accord.

"The withdrawal of certain parties will not shake the international community,' said Wang Yi, a special representative of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"The United States didn't even address the summit. However, Trump did surprise those at the conference by showing up for 14 minutes and listening to German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, before leaving...

"Modi doubled down on India's plans to expand renewable power, but made no promises on curtailing coal consumption.

"Japan's environment minister, speaking at a side event, said he would reduce his nation's

coal combustion, which has risen steadily after a turn away from nuclear power following the 2011 Fukushima disaster, but didn't offer how...

"Russia said it would ratify the Paris Agreement, but didn't spell out any emissions cuts.

"Instead, the international community will likely have to wait, possibly until next year, for countries to punch up their climate pledges. By then, the US will either have a new Democratic president-elect.... Or it will have another four years of Trump, extending the vacuum created by the absence of the US from climate diplomacy...

"NGOs expressed disappointment at the lackluster results in New York.

"Most of the major economies fell woefully short. Their lack of ambition stands in sharp contrast with the growing demand for action around the world,' said Andrew Steer, head of the World Resources Institute.

"The action now shifts to Santiago, which hosts the COP25 cli-

➤ **MakabentaA7**

mate talks this December. But the same cautious dynamic that played out in New York is likely to be repeated in Chile."

UN may run out of funds

In a report issued on Tuesday, October 8, the IANS (Indo-Indian News Service) reported that UN Secretary-General Guterres has warned that the world organization may run out of funds by the end of October.

The brief report said:

"With only 128 of the 193 member countries having paid their dues in full as of October 3, Guterres has reportedly warned UN staffers that the organization faced a shortfall of \$230 million.

"The UN's regular budget for the year is \$5.4 billion and it is separate from the peacekeeping budget of \$6.5 billion.

"India paid up its \$23.25 million dues for the regular budget on January 30 itself, one of the few countries to pay up on time.

"If the funds don't flow in this month from more of the nations in arrears, the UN will likely continue its operations by dipping into its working capital fund temporarily.

"One of the reasons for the shortfall is the US, which funds 22 percent of the UN's regular budget amounting to \$674 million, has not paid up in full so far.

"Because members do not send in their dues at the beginning of the year and the funds trickle in, the UN faces periodic budget crises.

"The number of countries paying in full has fallen significantly this year compared to previous years.

"Only 127 countries had sent in their contributions this year

by the end of September compared to 141 last year.

"Guterres told the General Assembly's budget committee in May, 'We are at a tipping point and what we do next will matter for years to come.'"

Open letter to the UN

I want to publish for the record the open letter to the UN secretary-general by 500 scientists and professionals, which declared that "there is no climate emergency."

This is historically significant because the failed UN climate summit and the open letter together could signify a turning point in the climate debate.

While the UN's climate agenda has foundered, the letter continues to gather signatories in many countries and all continents.

Here's the full text of the open letter, titled the "European Climate



Declaration," dated Sept. 23, 2019:

"There is no climate emergency.

"A global network of more than 500 knowledgeable and experienced scientists and professionals in climate and related fields have the honor to address to Your Excellencies the attached European Climate Declaration, for which the signatories to this letter are the national ambassadors.

"The general-circulation models of climate on which international policy is at present founded are unfit for their purpose. Therefore, it is cruel as well as imprudent to advocate the squandering of trillions on the basis of results from such immature models. Current climate policies pointlessly, grievously undermine the economic system, putting lives at risk in countries denied access to affordable, continuous electrical power.

"We urge you to follow a climate policy based on sound science, realistic economics and genuine concern for those harmed by costly but unnecessary attempts at mitigation. We ask you to place the Declaration on the agenda of your imminent New York session.

"We also invite you to organize with us a constructive high-level meeting between world-class scientists on both sides of the climate debate early in 2020. The meeting will give effect to the sound and ancient principle no less of sound science than of natural justice that both sides should be fully and fairly heard. *Audiat et altera pars!* (Listen to the other side.)

"Please let us know your thoughts about such a joint meeting."

It was signed by the 500 individuals who called themselves the "ambassadors of the

European Climate Declaration."

A lady or the tiger choice

Between the no-emergency declaration and the doomsday forecast of the UN, mankind is faced with a classic "lady or the tiger choice."

"The Lady, or the Tiger?" is a much-anthologized short story written by Frank R. Stockton for publication in the magazine *The Century* in 1882. "The lady, or the tiger?" has entered the English language as an allegorical expression for a problem that is unsolvable.

The choice in our present situation is easy to make. The world should just allow the financial crunch at the UN to starve Mr. Guterres and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of funds to scare the world with climate apocalypse.

yenmakabenta@yahoo.com



Forest guards, unsung heroes

VALENCIA, BUKIDNON—I will always carry the memory of Elpidio “Jojo” Malinao, a forest ranger in University of the Philippines Los Baños and friend of our family. Whenever I would go hiking on Mt. Makiling, I would see Kuya Jojo in the park entrance and he would tell me various stories of their patrols, from the animals they encountered to the mountaineers they had to rescue.

Great was our shock when he was killed one afternoon after testifying in court about illegal activities in the mountain. Incorruptible and dedicated to his mission, the ranger of 25 years was uncompromising in his stand against illegal logging and other destructive practices, and such dedication apparently cost him his life on that fateful day in May 2011.

Jojo Malinao’s predicament and fate, alas, is shared by forest protectors all over the country—perhaps even more so in this day and age, with the recent Global Witness report numbering them among the at least 113 environmental defenders killed in the three years since President Duterte took office, compared to just 65 in the same period before. Just a few weeks ago, forest ranger Bienvenido “Toto” Veguilla Jr. was killed by suspected illegal loggers in El Nido, Palawan.

Some of these “forest guards” (I use the term loosely to include rangers and foresters) are regularly employed by the government. Others are volunteers deputized by Protected Area Management Boards (PAMBs) and local environment agencies, receiving an “allowance” that depends on the generosity of the local governments. Though their positions vary in terms of their formal status, what they have in common is that they are underpaid and outnum-



SECOND OPINION

GIDEON LASCO

bered, receiving little support and protection even as they face threats of violence and death.

In an ongoing research project supported by the Forest Foundation Philippines, I have been visiting mountain communities in Mindanao and Luzon and listening to the narratives of forest guards, to better understand their role in conservation and the challenges they face.

Many of them, I learned, possess a deep love for the forests rooted in their cultural heritage. “The forest is our home,” as a *bantay gubat* in Aurora told me with tears in his eyes—a response I find echoed by many others. While forest guards gain social capital, a sense of belonging and economic opportunities in their position, many of them are also motivated by a genuine passion for the environment.

I also learned that forest guards actually make a positive impact on the mountains. When I asked the forest guards in Mt. Kitanglad how many trees they have planted, one of them said “around five”—and when I

incredulously repeated my question, he said, “Yes, five. Hectares.” By deterring illegal activity and taking an active role in reforestation, the Kitanglad Guard Volunteers (KGV) have doubtless been instrumental in the mountain’s remarkable net forest gain of thousands of hectares over the past two decades.

In light of their significant but under-appreciated role, one important response is to give due credit for their service. Aside from higher pay, they also plead for adequate equipment (e.g. two-way radios), health insurance and sustainable support. As Easter Canoy of the Kitanglad Integrated NGOs (KIN) reminds me, this also entails recognizing the role of indigenous communities in forest protection.

Secondly, it is imperative to give forest guards the support and protection they need. Beyond the controversial proposal to arm them, the government should act on their reports, build their capacity, take their side against powerful illegal actors, and address the social and political conditions that enable corruption and violence. Ominously, the Global Witness report points out that these crimes “are aided by the people and institutions meant to prevent them.”

Finally, we must bring justice for the forest guards and other environmental defenders who were killed in the line of duty or activism. Being the “deadliest country for environmental defenders” is an unacceptable distinction, one that the government must redouble its efforts to undo.

Impunity is not an option if we are to protect our forests—and the unsung heroes who are protecting them with their lives.

glasco@inquirer.com.ph



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



10-10-19

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

Employees of Lopez-led First Gen Corp. recently conducted a tree-planting activity at the Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal as part of efforts to rehabilitate the reservation area. Over 50 employees from First Gen's head office in Pasig City and from the site of the company's natural gas-fired power plants in Batangas City joined a two-kilometer trek from the base to the summit of the Masungi Georeserve, where they planted over 300 narra, bignay and banaba saplings.





Tarlac landfill seen as renewable energy hub

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

A sanitary landfill in Capas, Tarlac will soon transition into a high-technology recycling and renewable energy generation site that aims to reduce garbage disposed in the facility by at least 70 percent.

Rufo Colayco, president and CEO of Metro Clark Waste Management Corp., said the target is to build facilities for renewable energy generation at the Clark Integrated Facility operated by MCWMC by next year, given their proposed project worth \$210 million.

"Our waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities will bring our waste to the next level and help ensure that our company will be ready to accommodate the projected volume of waste to be generated by cities and municipalities in the Central and Northern Luzon regions," Colayco said in a recent press briefing in Quezon City.

Around 100 local government units in Central Luzon are being served by the landfill. The facility started operating in December 2002.

The WTE project can reportedly accommodate close to 3,000 tons of garbage per day.

To concretize their vision, Colayco said there is a need to develop an advanced centralized recycling facility at the waste management center where materials will be segregated for recycling and processing into secondary fuel.

The secondary fuel will then be used as the primary feeds stock for a secondary fuel that will generate up to 35 megawatts of renewable electrical energy for New Clark City.

"The results will reduce the amount of the residual waste disposed at the landfill by 70 percent, extending the lifespan of the solid waste management system for at least 50 years, reducing the emission of landfill leachate and landfill gas by virtually eliminating the disposal of organic waste in the landfill," Holger Host, MCWMC founder said.

Colayco said that MCWMC guarantees secure and sustainable waste management for Central Luzon in the next 30 years.

The development of the waste-to-energy project awaits a go-signal from the Bases Conversion and Development Authority. It will reportedly take three years to complete.

MCWMC is a joint venture of Filipino and German investors BN Ingenieure GmbH and Heers and Brockstedt Umwelttechnik GmbH, that operates the sanitary landfill referred to as one of the high-tech waste disposal facilities in Asia on a 100-hectare site at Sitio Kalangitan in Barangay Cutcut, Capas, Tarlac.



Meralco bans use of single-use plastic across subsidiaries

By DANESSA RIVERA

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) has banned the use of single-use plastic (SUP) products across its subsidiaries.

"The protection of the environment is a collective obligation that we not only owe to the communities we serve, but more importantly, the future generation. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to ensure that we integrate sustainability in all areas of our operations and in our workplace to create a positive impact to the environment," Meralco president

and CEO Ray Espinosa said.

The ban from all of its premises, activities, and corporate events was implemented starting Oct. 1 as part of its thrust to help save the country's environment.

Starting Nov. 1, the ban will also apply to Meralco's subsidiaries namely Meralco Industrial Engineering Services Corp. (Miescor), CIS Bayad Center Inc. (Bayad Center), Meralco Energy Inc. (Mserv), Radius Telecoms Inc. (Radius), MSpectrum Inc. (Spectrum), MRAIL Inc. (MRAIL), Meralco Powergen Corp. (MGen), and

eSakay Inc. (eSakay).

Affiliated companies Comstech Integration Alliance Inc. (Comstech), Clark Electric Distribution Corp. (CEDC), and Shin Clark Power Group are also implementing the ban starting next month.

Moreover, Meralco's supply chain partners have also been told to ensure full compliance with the ban effective Jan. 1, 2020.

SUPs covered by the ban include plastic grocery bags, beverage bottles, food service utensils (cutlery, plates, cups, lids, straws, stirrers) and dis-

persing containers for cleaning fluids.

"Everyone in Meralco is committed to do their part in ensuring that we embrace sustainability as a way of life by greatly reducing our contribution to the million tons of plastics waste that are used and dumped in our water ways, rivers and oceans every day," Espinosa said.

Aside from reducing its contribution of plastic to landfills and marine pollution, Meralco also aims to educate employees and business partners on the responsible use

of plastic for proper disposal for a sustainable economy, and help pave the way for a lifestyle change.

According to a report published by the United Nations Environment Program, the world's ability to cope with plastic waste is already overwhelmed as only nine percent of the nine trillion kilos of plastic the world has ever produced has been recycled.

The report said most end up in landfills, dumps or in the environment. If current consumption patterns and waste management practices

continue, then by 2050 there will be around 12 trillion kilos of plastic litter in landfills and the environment.

Earlier this year, Meralco announced it is planning to develop 1,000 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy (RE) projects in the next seven years to provide cleaner and more cost-competitive power supply in its franchise area.

This would be done through MGen's subsidiary, MGEN Renewable Energy Inc., which was formed to serve as the platform for the strategic push to develop RE projects.



10-10-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Meralco bans single-use plastic

Manila Electric Company ("*Meralco*" or the "*Company*") (PSE: MER) announced that to help save the country's environment, it has banned single-use plastic ("*SUP*"), polystyrene foam and similar products from all of its premises, activities, and corporate events effective October 1, 2019.

In a statement, *Meralco* President and Chief Executive Officer **ATTY. RAY C. ESPINOSA** said, "The protection of the environment is a collective obligation that we not only owe to the communities we serve, but more importantly, the future generation. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to ensure that we integrate sustainability in all areas of our operations and in our workplace to create a positive impact to the environment."

The ban applies to the *Meralco* Industrial Engineering Services Corporation ("*Miescor*") Group, CIS Bayad Center, Inc. ("*Bayad Center*") Group, *Meralco* Energy, Inc. ("*Mserv*"), Radius Telecoms, Inc. ("*Radius*"), MSpectrum, Inc. ("*Spectrum*"), MRAIL, Inc. ("*MRAIL*"), *Meralco* Powergen Corporation ("*MGen*") Group, and eSakay, Inc. ("*eSakay*") as well as affiliated companies, Comstech Integration Alliance, Inc. ("*Comstech*"), Clark Electric Distribution Corporation ("*CEDC*"), and Shin Clark Power Group effective November 1, 2019.

Meralco's supply chain partners have also been told to ensure full compliance with the ban effective January 1, 2020.

Aside from reducing its contribution of plastic to landfills and marine pollution,

Meralco also aims to educate employees and business partners on the responsible use of plastic for proper disposal for a sustainable economy, and help pave the way for a lifestyle change.

According to a report published by the United Nations Environment Program, the world's ability to cope with plastic waste is already overwhelmed. Only nine per cent (9%) of the nine trillion kilos of plastic the world has ever produced has been recycled. Most end up in landfills, dumps or in the environment. If current consumption patterns and waste management practices continue, then by 2050 there will be around 12 trillion kilos of plastic litter in landfills and the environment.

As the first of many sustainability initiatives, the use of *SUP*, including polystyrene foam and similar products, is banned from all offices, premises and facilities of *Meralco*, including operations centers, business centers, subsidiaries, affiliates, and in company events and activities effective October 1, 2019. *SUP*s covered by the ban include plastic grocery bags, beverage bottles, food service utensils (cutlery, plates, cups, lids, straws, stirrers) and dispensing containers for cleaning fluids.

"Everyone in *Meralco* is committed to do their part in ensuring that we embrace sustainability as a way of life by greatly reducing our contribution to the million tons of plastics waste that are used and dumped in our water ways, rivers and oceans every day," said Espinosa.



CONSERVATION PRECISION: A POLLUTION-CONTROL OFFICER'S JOURNEY TOWARD KEEPING MINING SUSTAINABLE

Oliver Donato, Outstanding Pollution Control Officer (TOPCO) of Pollution Control Association of the Philippines Inc. (PCAPI)'s 39th general assembly, hails from the mineral rich community of Didipio, where a large scale mining firm operates. Securing a spot in TOPCO entails successfully implementing environmental and pollution control systems and ensuring that one's organization does not violate any environmental law. Oliver is the first Novo Vizcayaño to win the award, and his journey to the top is a testament to how precision leads to recognition.

Maintaining an efficient and responsible mining operation requires great precision. Oliver Donato, who works as the Compliance Supervisor of OceanaGold Philippines, Inc.' (OGPI) Didipio Mine, learned this after years of training and practice.

Ever cognizant that mining is an important economic pillar, Donato and his team ensures the precision of environmental compliances of the mine operations for sustainability. Specifically, he oversees the implementation of OGPI's Environment Management System and ISO 14001 certification. Donato's role progressed in the company since getting hired in 2011 -- for a job he did not even consider his dream path.

"My first choice was computer engineering, but because of my parents' lack of money, I had to stop school for six years. I only continued when OceanaGold offered scholarships" Donato said in Filipino. "I finished Environmental Science at the Nueva Vizcaya State University, and OceanaGold imme-

diately gave me an employment opportunity."

During Donato's time, there were no high schools and transportation-friendly roads in Didipio yet -- families worked just for sustenance, economic opportunities were very slim. Donato only succeeded through opportunities presented by the mining company, coupled with perseverance.

Starting as an Environmental Assistant, Donato has had a hand in ensuring that the mine has all the required permits and is meeting all environmental and safety conditions. Rigorous training taught him precision in monitoring the mine's sustainability, finding fulfillment in each positive audit result.

Earning his superiors' confidence, Donato became top-of-mind when the compliance lead role opened up. It is Donato's values and character that landed him the job. Now, he facilitates internal audits; and monitors the tailings storage and water management facilities on a daily, weekly, and quarterly basis. The team to which Donato belongs to analyzes water samples internally (at OGPI's Environmental Laboratory) and externally through a DENR accredited laboratory. The team then sends the results to DENR Environmental Management Bureau - Region II through the Self-Monitoring Report prescribed by the bureau.

Being a Didipian himself, conserving his town's water supply has become Donato's top concern. His hard work has enabled him and his team to implement innovative ways to use as minimal raw water as possible in OGPI's Didipio opera-

tions. Tailings generated at the Processing Plant are deposited at the tailings storage facility for treatment; treated water is pumped back at the Processing Plant for reuse. Thus, water being used at the processing plant is 80 - 90% recycled.

It can be said that Didipio's progress was also Donato's progress, with the help of OGPI. What's remarkable about Donato is he did not stop at depending on OGPI - he persisted to finish his course to help his family more and to give back to his community too -- he has scholars in college, one of which was his cousin, who is now a certified forester.

Asked if there are challenges to his job, Donato said there is little to none. "Our only challenge right now is ensuring that the mine keeps on operating -- but that is for the top management and our national government to resolve. It is not hard for us to comply with environmental and safety standards, because OGPI is committed to this and always gives us the resources and trainings needed," he said.

"More than the company's environmental compliance, I just want OGPI's social development and management (SDMP), and corporate social responsibility projects to be sustainable. I recognize that the Company has implemented projects that are geared towards capacity-building of the communities, avoiding dependency on the operation of the mine. Ultimately, the actual sustainability would depend on the community residents who are the recipients of these projects, on how they make use of the projects," he said.



TITLE:

The final curtain

By ANTONIO CLAPAROLS

The saga continues. The systematic rape and destruction of our planet is way ahead of schedule. Pollution goes on unabated and the warming of the planet has reached disastrous proportions. Carbon dioxide emissions just keep on pouring in and have breached over 400 ppm.

What in heavens name are we waiting for? Are we waiting for the end of the world? It seems like it.

I would rather die fighting for a safe and healthy planet than die uselessly in a flash flood and drown or get blown away by a hurricane. Or better still, just die of thirst or starve to death. Can't they feel the heat?

I see many new Arab springs in the making. I see people going to the streets and taking over, like the late Elinor Ostrom, the social economist and author of *Governing the Commons*, would tell us: we have to reclaim the commons back from the transnational corporations. She is absolutely right.

The global commons are ours and they are needed to sustain life in this planet – not for the consumption and thirst for power of a few evil and greedy interties.

The show must go on and the people must continue to live a life of wellness filled with food, water and clean air. Our oceans and forests need to be restored and the burning of fossil fuels must be stopped dead on its tracks.

Their time has come. Peak oil is here and must be eliminated. Why are we allowing oil to rule and power us to death? It is time to let the flowers grow and once again make the herds of the wild roam their migration paths.

Did you know that an octopus has three hearts and nine brains? That polyps build the greatest cities in coral reefs or that oceans absorb carbon dioxide and give us oxygen, like forests? No, you don't, for very little has been taught to us in school. Perhaps on purpose to keep us from being one with nature.

All this talk about going green and renewable energies being done is rhetoric to me; it's the same old song. Played back and recorded without a sense of meaning as far as I am concerned.

If nothing happens in the COP in New York, if no concrete action is taken to abate climate change, then I am afraid that we will all rise up and make our voices heard. Not with loud speakers and apps in smart phones but by taking charge and steering the course of our lives and planet.

It is time to change our development model. It's high time to change our leaders. Climate criminals must be jailed and stopped from further crimes against humanity.

Oh yes, I have seen the planet change. I have seen our forest felled and our coral reefs breeched. We have seen our fish catch dwindle and our species disappear. To plant and not harvest. To give back to Mother Earth what we took. To protect our environment and not destroy her. Before the final curtain drops.



Customs seizes refrigerant chemicals worth ₱4m

By Vito Barcelo

THE Bureau of Customs seized refrigerant chemicals worth some P4 million without the necessary clearance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources—Environmental Management Bureau.

In a statement, 1,150 units of Koman Refrigerant chemicals arrived on September 7, 2019 at the Manila International Container Port from China.

The chemicals were consigned to Barcolair Philippines Inc. and were processed by customs broker Alex Talaboc Bayot but it was

found out that the importer had neither renewed their registration as an importer nor secured a Pre-Shipment Importation Clearance resulting in the interception of their goods.

Refrigerant chemicals are widely used in air conditioners and refrigerators and the main

cause of destruction on the ozone layer compounded by its huge global warming potential.

The BOC said importation of refrigerant chemicals required all importers to register with EMB and must secure a PSIC before the entry of such chemicals into the country.



Firm warns of higher water rates

HIGH COURT RULING

CONCESSIONAIRE WARNS OF RISE IN WATER RATES, WORSE TRAFFIC

By Ronnel W. Domingo
@RonWDomingoINQ

Water rates would rise and traffic congestion would further worsen in Metro Manila if a Supreme Court order compelling Manila Water Co. Inc. to pay P921.5 million for violating the Clean Water Act is enforced, the company said on Wednesday.

Manila Water spokesperson Jeric Sevilla said implementation of the high court's decision would raise the sewerage charge, translating to P26.70 per cubic meter.

"Worse traffic is also to be expected since hundreds of kilometers of roads, including Edsa, which are part of the Manila Water's East Zone [concession area], would have to be dug up all at the same time," Manila Water said in a statement.

"The daily loss of P3.5 billion caused by existing traffic congestion could balloon significantly," added the **A2**

Business establishments
Based on Manila Water's concession agreement with the regulator, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), only business establishments should shoulder the sewerage charge—pegged at 30 percent of the basic charge.

For the current rate-setting period, Manila Water's business customers pay P505.66 for the first 10 cubic meters and between P55.05 and P66.78 for the succeeding cubic meters depending on the volume consumed.

In a decision promulgated on Aug. 6, the Supreme Court affirmed a decision of the Court of Appeals that found Manila Water and the MWSS guilty of violating Section 8 of the Clean Water Act. The law mandates that these entities connect all existing sewerage lines to the available sewerage system within five years from its effectivity, which started on May 6, 2004.

A similar decision applied to Maynilad Water Services Inc., the concessionaire in the west zone of Metro Manila, which also serves parts of Cavite province.

Motion for reconsideration

Manila Water, which last week filed a motion for reconsideration in the Supreme Court, said it had complied with its sewerage responsibilities under the Clean Water Act and that it should not be fined.

In a statement, the Ayala group subsidiary said the law "simply required MWSS. Manila Water and Maynilad to interconnect the 'existing' water lines of households, condominiums and subdivisions, among others, to the 'available' sewer lines of the concessionaires."

Manila Water said it had interconnected 61,000 out of 63,000 customers to its sewer network by 2009, or within the five-year period since the law took effect.

It added that the remaining 2,000 customers could not be connected to its sewerage network because the available sewers "would be compromised if overloaded."

"But since then, [we have] installed additional sewers and spent billions of pesos more than [we have] collected for the purpose, Manila Water said.

water rates

40-year project

"Sec. 8 [of the law] did not envision the completion of the program by 2037 when the concession agreement with the MWSS expires.

Manila Water chief operating officer Abelardo P. Basilio said that since 1997, when the company took over the east zone, it had spent a total of P38.5 billion on wastewater programs from collection of fees of only P36.9 billion.

Basilio said this meant that Manila Water laid out "excess whole project, only the interconnection."

The company added that if it were to do within five years what was planned as a 40-year project, the hundreds of billions of pesos that would have been spent would lead to an increase in the water bill of customers.

Last month, Manila Water said it intended to spend P115 billion more over the next 17 years to complete its sewerage investments" of P1.6 billion, something that the company expected to continue.

Refund, fine

Besides the penalty slapped by the Supreme Court for violating the Clean Water Act, Manila Water was fined by the MWSS.

It shelled out P353 million to compensate customers who suffered many hours and even days with low pressure or no water at all in March, through a one-time voluntary bill waiver program that was implemented in April.

On top of that and for the same reason—which is failure to deliver on the concessionary requirement of providing customers continuous water supply for more than 15 days—the MWSS penalized Manila Water a total of P1.13 billion.

Similarly, the MWSS meted out to Maynilad a fine of P2,500 per affected connection or household for its failure in May to supply water in portions of Barangay Captain Albert Aguilar in Las Piñas City.

Less than 2,000 connections were affected. INQ

WHAT WENT BEFORE

In August, the Supreme Court, voting 14-0, held water concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. liable for about P1 billion each for violation of the Clean Water Act.

The case stemmed from a Department of Environment and Natural Resources decision in 2009 to fine the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), Maynilad and Manila Water for violating Section 8 of Republic Act No. 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

The law requires the MWSS and the two concessionaires to connect

sewerage lines in subdivisions, homes, complexes, commercial buildings and other establishments to the available sewerage system.

In 2011, the Court of Appeals affirmed the decision of the environmental department.

The Supreme Court, in its decision promulgated on Aug. 6, said each concessionaire, separately as well as jointly with the MWSS, was liable to a total of P921.5 million in penalty effective May 7, 2009.

The respective fines should be paid within 15 days from when the decision became final.

They will be slapped an additional fine that starts at P322,101 per day of failure to settle the penalty. This will increase by 10 percent every two years of failure.

Also, the Supreme Court said the total amount of fines imposed by the decision should earn an interest of 6 percent yearly from finality and until full settlement of the fines.

Earlier this month, the two water firms, in separate motions, asked the Supreme Court to reverse its ruling ordering them to pay the fines. —INQUIRER RESEARCH

Source: Inquirer Archives

FROM A1

publicly listed company, a concessionaire in large swaths of Metro Manila and parts of Rizal province.



What needs to happen first in order for water body rehabilitation efforts to succeed

By Robert Y. So

IN OCTOBER 2018, the Pasig River made headlines for winning the inaugural Asia River Prize award from the International River Foundation. The organization recognized the efforts of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) to clean and restore the river to make it biologically habitable again. These efforts include removing structures that directly pollute the river, diverting waste being discharged into the river, and relocating thousands of informal settlers around the river into decent homes.

Less than a year later, the PRRC would make headlines again as President Rodrigo Duterte fired its executive director, Jose Antonio Goitia. While no specific reason was given for the termination, the administration stated that it was part of "the President's continuing mandate to eradicate graft and corruption."

Notably, the sacking came only a few months after the Commission on Audit reported that six of PRRC's rehabilitation projects were moving very slowly despite already using a majority of their respective budgets. While PRRC subsequently denied the claims, it still admitted that it was facing challenges with the six projects, namely the presence of informal

settlers and opposition from local government units.

The situation underscores an unfortunate reality in local water rehabilitation projects — it takes more than a couple of cleanup efforts to really become impactful. In order for the Pasig River, Manila Bay, and all other bodies of water around the country to be fully rehabilitated, there needs to be some fundamental changes done in the areas surrounding them to ensure that any cleanup effort won't go to waste.

LOOKING OUTSIDE

To understand what it takes to make a water rehabilitation project effective, it's best to look at successful examples around the world. Fortunately, one of the most noteworthy water rehabilitation projects in recent history can be found in neighboring Singapore.

As Singapore rose as a global center for trade and commerce in the 19th and 20th centuries, it's main body of water, the Singapore River, became more and more polluted. With both residential and commercial locations dumping their waste into the river, it became a large, foul-smelling obstacle and a negation of Singapore's development.

In fact, nothing concrete was done until 1977. By then, former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had ordered various Singaporean government agencies to under-

take the cleaning of the Singapore River as well as the adjacent Kallang Basin. After years of extensive planning, the government embarked on a 10-year plan to restore the river to its former glory.

A study by The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences noted three activities that had to be done to fast track the rehabilitation project, on top of actually removing the waste that was already in the bodies of water. First was the relocation of several commercial industries around the river that dumped hazardous waste into the river, which included farms, vendors, and manufacturing plants. Second was to move the thousands of informal settlers living along the edges of the bodies of water, who discharged waste into the rivers for their daily sanitary needs, into public housing.

Third, and perhaps the most important, was to recognize pollutants that were far away from the bodies of water, emanating from areas around the country that didn't have proper sewage systems. As the sewage in these areas wasn't treated correctly, their waste was eventually discharged into the rivers and contributed to increasing water pollution. And so various government agencies were mobilized, tasked to remove any structures that discharged untreated waste into the rivers as well as to connect these areas to a formal sewerage system.

LOCAL ROADBLOCKS

While local water rehabilitation efforts have been able to replicate the first two activities of the Singapore River rehabilitation project, the same can't be said about the third activity. Manila Water revealed at the start of the year that its sewerage system covered only 23% of its clients, while Maynilad's equivalent figure was 20% by the end of 2018.

Both concessionaires have been fined by the Supreme Court for these low figures as a violation of the Clean Water Act. However, Manila Water and Maynilad both attributed these low figures to citizens choosing not to connect to their sewerage systems for fear of incurring higher costs in their utility bills due to sewerage charges. The two have urged the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to task local government units in mobilizing these sewerage efforts in their own areas.

Moreover, the two concessionaires are only required to treat the sewage of residential properties. Thus, other types of properties such as commercial, office, and industrial developments need to treat their own sewage and waste water, and they do so by tapping specialty contractors that provide the necessary sewerage technology. While the discharge from these private developments is regulated, these specialty contractors



* are not. The authenticity of their technology is left to the property developers to validate, resulting in a large variance between the quality of sewage and waste water treatment per development.

All these figures mean that an overwhelming majority of waste being dumped into the bodies of water around Metro Manila is not treated properly. Even if large-scale cleanups of the Pasig River and Manila Bay happen, they will not be able to do anything about the untreated waste that will be discharged into these bodies of water by unsewered locations, further increasing water pollution and hindering rehabilitation efforts.

GREAT AGAIN

What needs to happen, then, is to fast track the installation of sewerage systems across the region in order to ensure that any waste discharged into Manila Bay and the Pasig River has been treated properly. Proper sewerage will not only reduce the pollution in the region's bodies of water, it will also improve the quality of life for many residents, as they will be less prone to waterborne diseases.

Taking a page from the Singapore River rehabilitation, this effort must involve the contributions of various government agencies and private companies, as improving the sewerage system of an entire region requires massive investments in technology and infrastructure. The 10-year Singapore River rehabilitation project reportedly cost the Singaporean government around S\$200 million. Factoring inflation, that would cost around S\$342 million today, or almost P13 billion.

Fortunately, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System has already set targets for improving the sewerage coverage in Metro Manila. While it found the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' target of 100% coverage by 2026 "unrealistic," the agency is committed to connect the entire region to a sewerage system by 2037. It further revealed that it aims to reach 40% coverage by 2022, which it considers the "tipping point."

It is only through installing proper sewerage systems across the region and through private developers investing in authentic and appropriate sewage treatment technology that we will be able to start fully restoring the Pasig River, Manila Bay, and the rest of the region's bodies of water to their former glory. While it might take longer than the 10 years it took Singapore to clean up its major rivers, the care, consideration, and mindset to do things right will result in a most significant effort by government, the private sector, and communities to make the region's bay and waterways great again — the same that first brought life to a city and defined Manila as our nation's capital. ■



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

BusinessWorld™



10-10-19

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

Maynilad allots P53B for new sewer lines

MAYNILAD Water Services, Inc. has allocated more than P53.4 billion to install new sewer lines spanning up to 425 kilometers starting next year until the end of its concession in 2037 to ensure the provision of sewerage services for its customers in the west zone.

"Sewer pipes have to be laid at a lower depth compared to water pipes — some as deep as fourteen meters below ground level — so wastewater projects take a longer time to complete," said Randolph T. Estrellado, Maynilad chief operating officer, in a statement on Wednesday.

He warned that the installation of the sewer network may cause some inconvenience to motorists.

"To minimize traffic congestion in our project sites, we will use trenchless technology where feasible, although said technology will significantly increase the cost to install the sewer network," he said.

Maynilad said the new sewer lines, to be laid in various portions of the west concession from Caloocan to Cavite over the next 18 years, will enable the company to catch wastewater generated by its over 9.6 million customers, and convey it to sewage treatment plants.

It said about 20% of Maynilad's water-served population are currently connected to the sewer network. The share came from only 6% before the privatization of MWSS operations in 1997, Maynilad said, adding that those that are unconnected are provided septic tank cleaning services by Maynilad.

Maynilad said it is now laying sewer lines in Valenzuela, Cavite City, Las Piñas, and in barangays Cupang and Tunasan in Muntinlupa. It recently completed sewer-

age projects such as the those in Pasay and Parañaque.

The company said under its approved business plan, it still has to spend almost P200 billion for wastewater projects from 2019 until the end of the concession period in 2037.

"With the invaluable assistance of local government units and the relevant government agencies, we can facilitate completion of our sewerage projects despite the difficulties posed by right-of-way conflicts and lack of land for treatment facilities. Only by working together can we truly realize the goal of rehabilitating the Manila Bay," said Ramoncito S. Fernandez, Maynilad president and chief executive officer.

The west zone concessionaire operates and maintains 588 kilometers of sewer lines and 22 wastewater facilities that have a combined treatment capacity of about 664,000 cubic meters per day.

Maynilad's statement on its capital outlay to install new sewer lines comes after it filed a motion for consideration on the Supreme Court decision to impose a P921 million fine on the company for failing to connect all existing sewage lines to the available sewerage system within five years from the effectivity of the Clean Water Act, or from May 6, 2004.

Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) has a 52.8% stake in Maynilad. MPIC is one of three key Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Philex Mining Corp. and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT). Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has a majority stake in *BusinessWorld*.

— **Victor V. Saulon**



TUBIG TIPIRIN!

Angat Dam, below normal high level pa rin

Umapela ang National Water Resources Board (NWRB) sa publiko na patuloy na magtipid ng tubig dahil nananatiling mas mababa sa normal high water level nito na 210 meters ang Angat Dam.

Kahit na nag-"normalized" na ang water level sa Angat Dam, ibig sabihin ay naabot na nito ang 180-meter normal operating level, mas mababa pa rin ang current level na 189.63 meters sa 210 meters normal

high level para sa tag-ulan.

Ang Angat Dam ang pangunahing pinagkukunan ng tubig ng Metro Manila. Upang matiyak na mayroong sapat na na tubig para sa milyun-milyong kabahayan sa susunod na summer season, kailangang umabot sa 210 meters ang water level sa Angat Dam.

Sinabi ni NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr. na pinanatili nila ang 40 cubic meters

per second (cms) allocation para sa domestic water supply at 30 cms para sa irigasyon ngayong buwan.

"We will see developments this month if we will implement adjustments in water allocation in November," ani David.

"We are reiterating responsible use and water conservation efforts by the public to help reduce demand for more water from Angat Dam," dagdag niya.

Elialyn De Vera-Ruiz



NWRB NAGSAGAWA NG 'WATER EDUCATION PROGRAM' SA BUNGAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, QC

AYON kay Dr. Seville David, Jr., CESO III, Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), "90% ng "raw water" na nagmumula sa Angat Dam ay ginagamit sa Metro Manila at ng magsasaka para sa patubig sa 28,000 hectares ng bukiran sa Bulacan at Pampanga".

Base sa ulat ng Hydrological Information ng Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRMRC) kahapon ng 8:00 ng umaga (October 8, 2019), ang antas ng tubig sa tatlong dams ay 189.73 (Angat), 100.88 (Ipo) at 17.52 (Bustos). Angat reservoir ay nasa may kulang ng 22.27 meters base sa 212 normal high water level (NHWL).

Kamakailan, nagsagawa ng back-to-back 'Water Education Program for the Youth' ang National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ukol sa kahalagahan ng wastong paggamit ng tubig gayundin ang tamang pamamahala ng nagamit na tubig sa mga mag-

aaral ng Cubao Elementary School at ang Bungad Elementary School sa Project 7, Quezon City.

Nagsasagawa ng Information and Education Campaign (IEC) ang NWRB sa publiko ukol sa mga bagay na may kinalaman sa tubig lalong-lalo pagdating sa pagtitipid at tamang paggamit. Isa na rito ang 'Water Education Program for the Youth' na target ipaalam sa mga kabataan ang pagpapahalaga sa tubig partikular sa mga nasa elementarya.

Mas murang edad na maturuan ang mga bata, mas maiintindihan nila at kalalakhian ang pagkakaroon ng disiplina at pagpapahalaga sa tubig, kaya pinangunahan nina Heleena Claire Espina, Rowell Ynzon, Josephine Abelana at Alpha Areniego ang isang IEC campaign sa Bungad Elementary School sa Project 7, Quezon City. Katuwang ng NWRB sa programang ito ang Philippine Water Partnership at ang Manila



DR. HILDA C. ONG

Water Company, Inc.

Upang maiparating ng malinaw ang mensahe ukol sa El Niño at La Niña phenomenon, tamang paggamit at pagtitipid ng tubig, gumawa si Heleena Claire ng mga kuwentong nababagay sa mga bata na may pamagat na "Munting Patak-ulan" at "Gigie, the Water Princess" na naglalaman ng tamang mga pag-uugali para pahalagahan ang tubig.

Upang mas maakit ang atensyon ng mga mag-aaral, nagpalabas sila ng isang puppet show na humihikayat sa mga bata na maging mga 'water warriors' sa pamamagitan ng pagtuturo sa mga kapwa kaklase, mga kalaro, at sa sariling tahanan ang tamang paggamit at pagtitipid ng tubig sa Bungad Elementary School noong ika-20 ng September 2019.

Tamang-tama ang programang ito ng NWRB, kailangang maitama sa paningin ng mga bata ang mga maling gi-

nagawa nating mga matatanda. Ika nga, 'kung ano ang nakikita sa mga nakatatanda, gagayahin ng mga bata.' Kinakailangan talaga na mapataas ang antas ng kaalaman ng publiko upang maiwasanang mas malalang problemang may kaugnayan sa tubig sa mga hinaharap na panahon. Hindi biro ang 4,200 katao na namamatay sa ating bansa dala ng maruming tubig.

Tatal ay mayroon namang regular na isinasagawang mga seminar ukol sa paghahanda sa mga kalamidad at sakuna ang mga lokal na disaster management team, dapat sigurong maisama ang usapin tungkol sa tubig lalo pat'tila isang malaking kalamidad kapag may kakuilangan ng tubig. Sa ganitong paraan, mas marami ang nabibigyan ng impormasyon.

Simulan natin sa ating sarili ang pagtitipid at tamang paggamit ng tubig, malaking tulong ito. Maging halimbawa sa iba.





A matter of preservation

Much has been said about the beauty of Palawan, considered the “Philippines’ last frontier” for the longest time. But is this still true today?

“*Sad thing is continued poverty contributes to the unwitting abuse of the environment, with illegal logging and mining said to be still among the toughest problems to solve.*”

A recent visit to Lio, El Nido, northwest of Palawan, reveals that the province still has that rustic charm and “undiscovered” vibe, with plants and trees thriving by the wayside and the air breathable for walking under bright sunshine unobscured by smog.

El Nido was made famous by foreign productions like the movies “The Beach” (where it was portrayed as part of Thailand), “Bourne Legacy” and the reality series “Survivor.”

Meanwhile, Palawan’s capital city Puerto Princesa and the popular diving destination Coron each have distinct characteristics that have attracted tourists from all over the world for many years now.

El Nido – and in particular, Lio – has also caught the tourism bug. The town that boasts a much-Instagrammed beach is waking up to property development, with quaint resorts now joined by bigger structures that boast sleek, minimalist designs.

No doubt the infrastructure needed to boost tourism will follow even though El Nido airport, though basic, is well-designed to suit the surroundings.

Palawan
Governor

Kose Alvarez recently revealed they are gunning for four regional airports in the coming years – in Coron, Balabac, San Vicente and Taytay municipalities – to increase the volume of tourist arrivals.

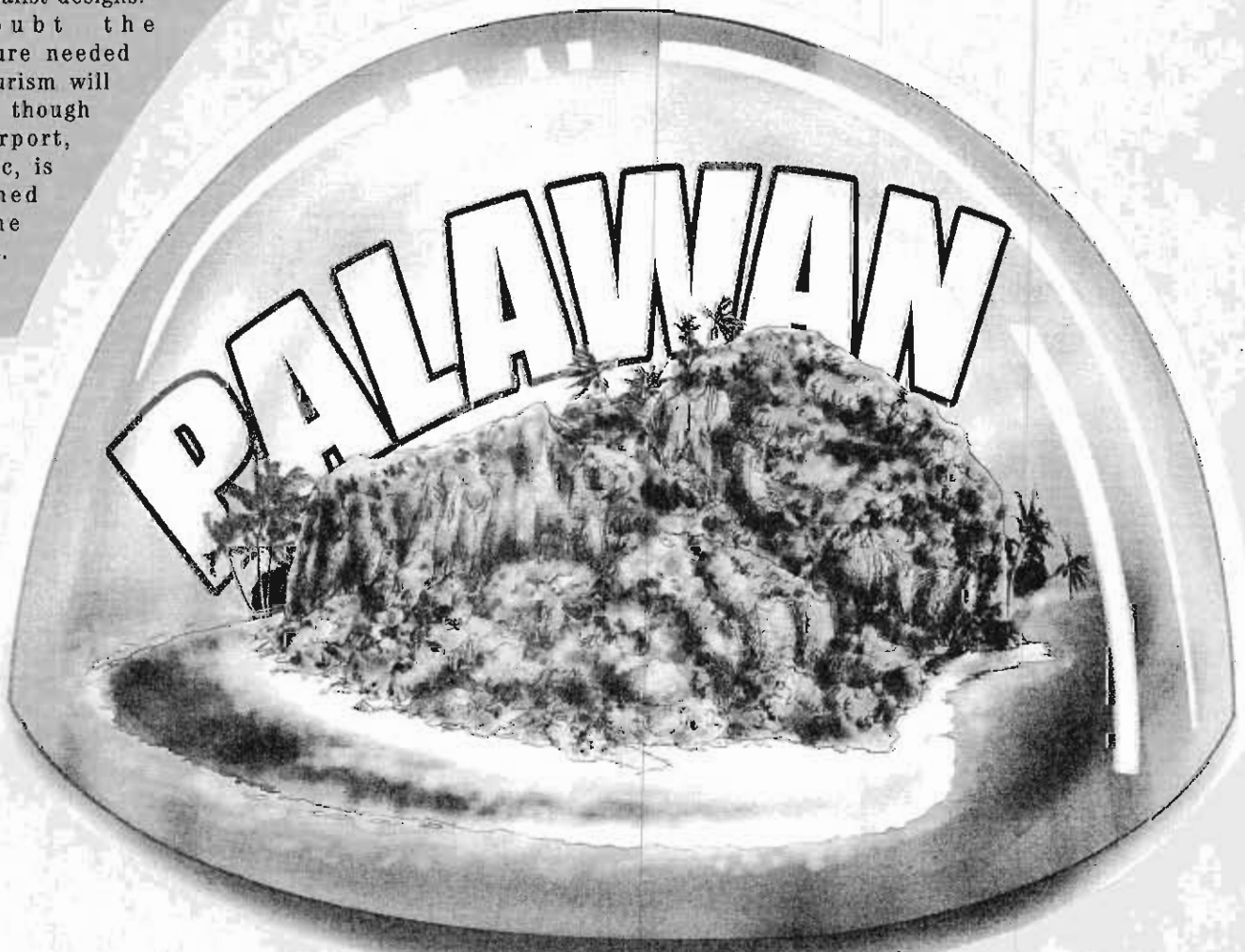
There are, however, worrisome glimpses of a denuded patch on a mountain by the ocean, as well as a glaring gash of reddish soil bared by quarrying at the foot of a hill on the way to the center of town from the airport.

The Palawan government has been quite active in its environment protection efforts, warning businesses to follow its environment rules or risk being shuttered.

The stakes are high for this province, as we all know. Being the “last frontier” ecologically is the biggest challenge to its local government’s strength of will and purpose.

Fortunately, the province has generally managed to keep its mystique intact, with many islands yet untouched, although this is said to be fast-changing nowadays.

Interest in the area has been more



A matter of presentation

2/2

pronounced of late, especially following Boracay's decline.

Palawan has recently received "top destination" kudos from travel sites, and a rash of resort openings, as well as alternative accommodations, are luring more tourists into the area.

A thriving tourism industry is always a good thing for the locals, certainly. However, if the Palawan local government is serious in its desire to keep it thriving by way of sustainable practices, then it should beef up its enforcement even more now.

In forest cover alone, Palawan used to be the number one in the Philippines, according to the 2013 Forestry Statistics report released by the Forest Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

And while Boracay is resting and Palawan picking up, the rest of the beautiful sites in these islands should learn to maximize their assets while minimizing damage.

Palawan's greatest charms of limestone cliffs, a rich marine life and fauna, jungle-like mountains and coral reefs in the Sulu Sea must never be wasted or destroyed with overdevelopment, neglect or irresponsibility.

It is a sort of "gatekeeping" that local government must do in order to preserve the province's bountiful assets.

The sad thing is continued poverty contributes to the unwitting abuse of the environment, with illegal logging and mining said to be still among the toughest problems to solve.

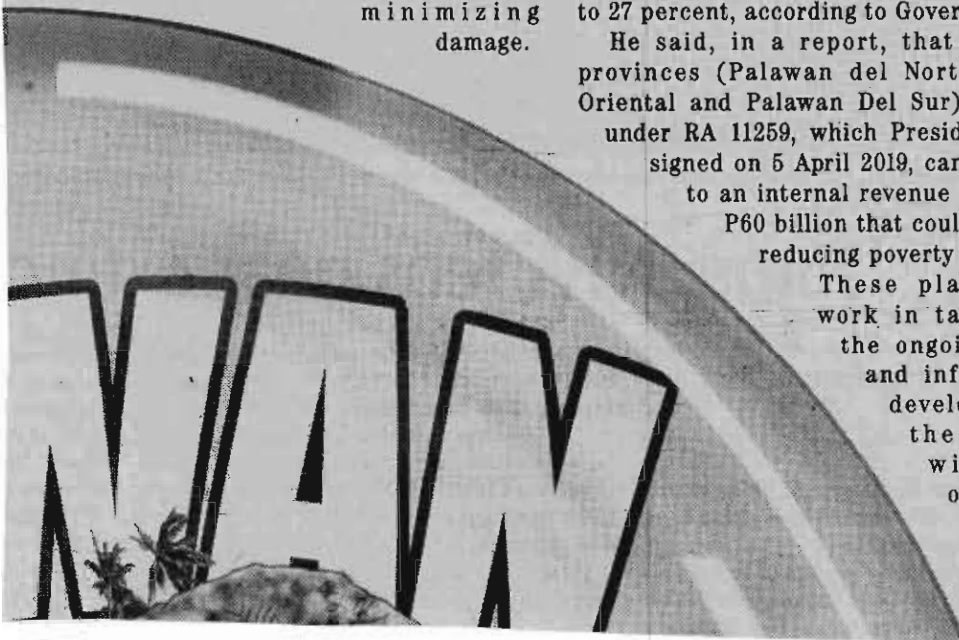
Government, a few months ago, came up with a tourism program to push for economic growth in the province.

It aims to reduce the poverty level in the Philippines' biggest province from 56 percent to 27 percent, according to Governor Alvarez.

He said, in a report, that "the three provinces (Palawan del Norte, Palawan Oriental and Palawan Del Sur) envisioned under RA 11259, which President Duterte signed on 5 April 2019, can be entitled to an internal revenue allotment of P60 billion that could be used in reducing poverty incidence."

These plans should work in tandem with the ongoing tourism and infrastructure developments in the province with, most of all, cooperation and unity from all citizens.

“
If the Palawan local government is serious in its desire to keep it thriving by way of sustainable practices, then it should beef up its enforcement even more now.”





STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



10-10-19

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/

DATE



Jove Benosa, EcoWaste Coalition zero waste manager; Abigail Agullar, regional campaign coordinator for Greenpeace Southeast Asia; and Beau Baconguis, Asia-Pacific coordinator of Break Free From Plastic show a report on how top brands allegedly fool consumers with false solutions to plastic pollution during a press conference in Quezon City last Monday.

MICHAEL VARGAS



ULTIMATUM Ni BENNY ANTIPORDA

DAPAT na pag-aralan nang husto ng mga awtoridad ang mga pangunahing dahilan ng napakamahal na mga produktong petrolyo sa Pilipinas sa kabila ng pagiging mura nito sa pandaigdigang merkado.

Sa ngayon, mga Bro, \$52 lang kada bariles sa Amerika at nasa \$58 sa Europa.

Ayon naman sa Russia, maaaring maglalaro lang sa \$50 dolyar sa mga susunod na buwan.

Dahilan ng Russia, humihina ang ekonomiya ng buong mundo at isang dahilan dito ang giyera sa negosyo sa pagitan ng Amerika at China at paghahanap ng Amerika ng magigi-yera nito, kasama na ang Europa.

ANG GIYERA

Ayon sa mga Kano, meron sila ng lahat ng bagay at kailangang sila ang maghari sa mundo.

Para higit na maganda ang ekonomiya ng Amerika, pinauwi nito ang mga kompanyang Kano mula sa Tsina kasabay ng pagpapataw ng mahal na buwis sa mga produktong galing Tsina.

Rumeresbak naman ang Tsina sa pagpapataw rin ng buwis sa mga produktong Kano na pumasok sa Tsina.

Pinagbabawalan din ng Amerika ang mga kompanyang Kano na magsulap ng pangangailangan ng mga kompanyang Tsino gaya ng nagaganap sa Chinese-owned na Huawei, ang pinakamalaking kompanyang telepono sa mundo, na wala nang sistemang Android na gawang Kano sa mga cellphone nito.

Kinakalkal na rin ng mga Kano ang sarili nilang mga deposito ng langis at 5% na lang ng kinukuha nito ang nanggaging sa mga Arabong bansa.

\$50 NA LANG ANG LANGIS, MAHAL PA RIN SA PINAS

Kasabay ito ng pagbabawal din sa Venezuela na magkaroon ng mga sangkap sa pagrepina ng langis kaya paralisado ang industriyang langis ng una na isa sa may pinakamalaking deposito ng langis sa buong mundo.

Gusto ng mga Kano na magkaroon ng Pangulo sa Venezuela na tuta nila at isuko ng Venezuela ang mga oilfield sa mga kompanyang Kano.

Nagsisimula na ring patawan ng malalaking buwis ang mga produktong British at tila nada-damay na rin ang mga bansang kasapi ng European community.

HAYAHAY

ANG MGA KANO

Kung magsasara ang mga dayuhang kompanya dahil sa mga mahal na buwis mula pagkain hanggang gamot, makinarya at teknolohiya, eroplano at armas, pagkakataon na ng mga Kano ang maghari sa negosyo, pagyaman ng Amerika at hayahay na buhay ng mga Kano.

Kung makontrol din ng mga Kano ang negosyo sa langis, lalong magha-

hari ang Amerika.

Gumagawa na sila ng mga pier na pagdaungan ng mga oil tanker, ng mga sariling oil tanker at pino-protektan nila nang husto ang mga interes ng mga kompanyang langis na Kano sa iba't ibang panig ng mundo.

Aagawan ng mga Kano ng palengke ng langis ang mga Arabo at miyembro ng Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, kasama ang Venezuela, Russia, Britain, Iran at iba pa.

Sinisira rin ng mga Kano ang magandang relasyon ng ibang mga bansa sa mga itinuturing nilang kaibabang o kakumpitensya at sinisikap nilang higit nilang kakampi o ganap na tuta ang mga lider ng ibang mga bansa.

Ito'y para masiguro nilang pabor lahat sa kanila ang mga interes sa negosyo at pulitika na magbubunga ng higit nilang kapangyarihan at pagyaman.

\$147 vs \$55

KADA BARILES

Maaalala pa ang kamahalan ng langis noong

2008 na umabot sa \$147 kada bariles.

Halos magkapantay ang presyo ng diesel at gasolina noon sa halagang P58-60 kada litro habang umabot sa P70 kada litro sa Mindanao at iba malalayong lugar sa Metro Manila noon.

Ang palitan ng dolyar noon ay nasa P47 kada \$1.

Ngayon naman, nasa P52-P54 ang gasolina habang nasa P42-P45 ang diesel.

Pero nasa \$55 kada bariles lang ngayon at nasa P52 ang kapalit ng \$1.

Ano kaya ang masasabi ng Department of Energy rito?

UNBUNDLING NG LANGIS

Sa kuryente, may unbundling o pagtilad-tilad ng lahat ng bagay na nakaapekto sa pagpresyo ng elektrisidad mula sa ginagamit na fuel ng mga planta hanggang sa importad na mga sangkap, palitan ng piso sa dolyar at marami pang iba at napakahaba nga ang listahan na makikita sa monthly bill.

Makikita ito kung may pandaraya o wala.

Unbundling din ang gustong ipataw ng gub-

yerno sa mga kompanya ng langis kaya lang kinokontra nila ito dahil mahahayag daw ang sikreto nila sa pagnegosyo.

Sa unbundling ng kuryente, walang nangyayari dahil may mga monopolyo.

Hindi kaya ganito rin ang mangyayari sa langis dahil may monopolyo rin?

At ang monopolyo, lalo na ng Big 3 na Petron, Shell at Caltex, ay pinapayagan ng batas, ang Oil Deregulation Law, na magtaas-baba ng presyo ng langis ayon sa gusto nila nang halos walang magawa ang gobyerno.

Ginawang inutil ang gobyerno sa usaping ito ng mismong batas na ginawa bilang kapalit ng pagutang ng gobyerno noon ng \$650 milyon at pag-aalis ng Petron sa kamay ng gobyerno para walang paniabai ang gobyerno sa mataas na pagpresyo ng mga dayuhang kompanyang langis.

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