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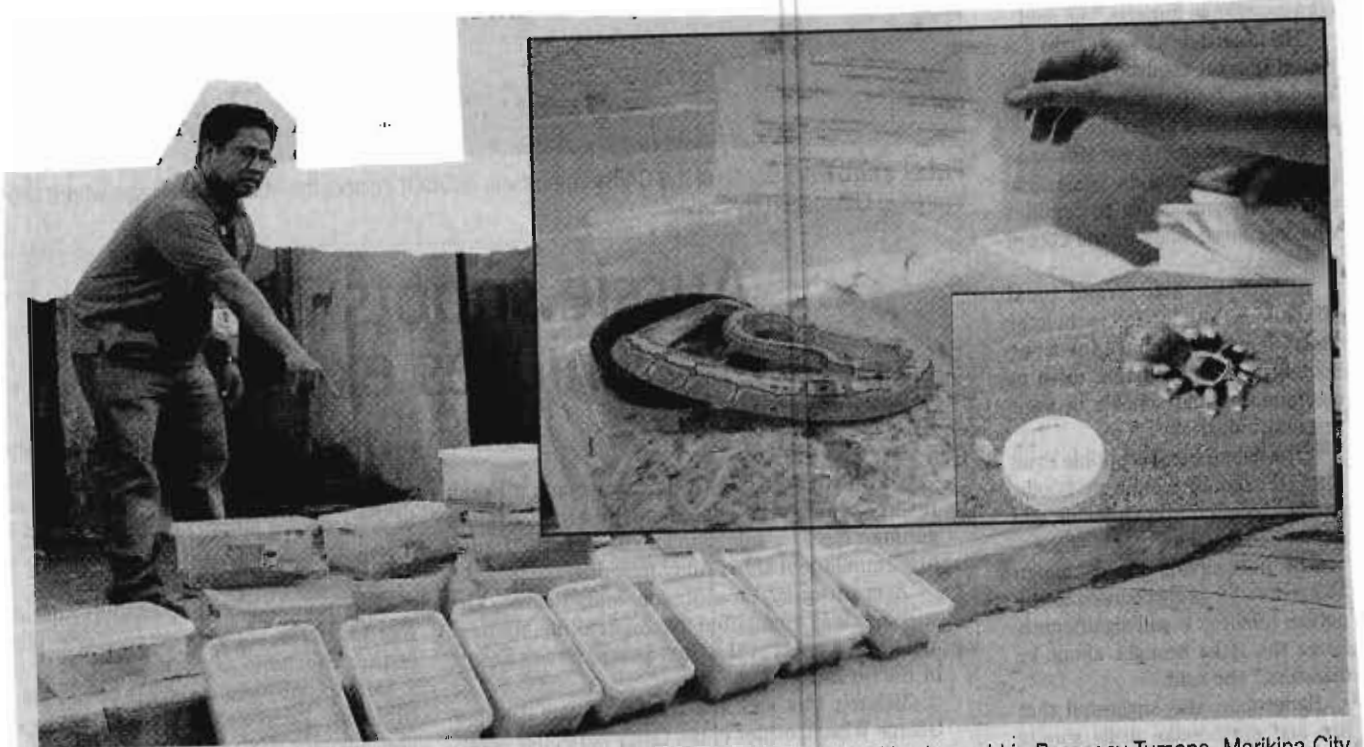
Saturday

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Wildlife Live tarantulas and ball pythons were among illegal wildlife seized by authorities in a raid in Barangay Tumana, Marikina City. The endangered species are worth at least P106,000.



Angat Dam level dips; water service cut eyed

THE level of Angat Dam, Metro Manila's main water source, has dropped, prompting regulators to warn Friday of water service interruptions.

Angat's water level was at 187.28 meters as of 6 a.m., down

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This aerial photo taken on June 28, 2019 shows the low water level of Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan. **AFP**

Angat Dam...

From A1

from about 191 meters in September, said National Water Resources Board Executive Director Sevillo David Jr.

The dam's declining level prompted regulators to slash the water supply allocation in Metro Manila to 40 cubic meters per second from the regular 46 m³/s, he told radio dzMM.

"We need to prepare if there will be less rains. There is a possibility that concessionaires could reduce their service because the allocation is not normal," he said in Filipino.

The two water concessionaires for the national capital region, meanwhile, have urged customers to save water amid limited water supply released by the NWRB.

The allocation coursed through the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System remains at 40 cubic meters per second (m³/s) until November, compared with the usual 46 m³/s, because Angat Dam's water level remains below the normal high of 212 meters, according to the board.

The target is to reach the 212-meter normal high by the end of the year, the NWRB said.

Manila Water, stressing the same points, with Manila Water's corporate communications head Jeric Sevilla saying in a separate interview, Manila Water issued an advisory stating it might implement a rotational service interruption.

But NWRB Executive Director Sevillo David Jr. noted the current water level at Angat Dam was still above the minimum operating level of 180 meters.



Mga consumer pinagtitiipid ng Manila Water, Maynilad

PINAGTITIIPID ng Maynilad at Manila Water ang publiko sa paggamit ng tubig kasunod ng limitadong supply na inilalabas ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

Nabatid na nanatiling 40 cubic meter per second (m³/s) ang ilalabas hanggang sa Nobyembre kumpara sa 46 m³/s na ordinaryong inilalabas dahil na rin na ang water level sa Angat dam ay nanatiling mababa sa normal high na 212 meters.

Nalaman na target na maabot ang 212-meter normal high hanggang sa huling buwan ng taon.

"Humihingi po kami ng tulong sa ating mga customer na gawin po natin 'yung responsible use of water para mapagtulung-tulungan nating itawid ito hanggang summer months next year," ayon kay Engr. Ronaldo Padua, Maynilad Water Supply Operations head.

"Pilit po nating pinagtutulungan

i-preserve 'yung na-store na water sa Angat dam by means of reducing po 'yung tubig na nire-release from Angat at 'yung dini-distribute po natin sa ating mga customer," dagdag pa ni Padua.

Nanawagan ang dalawang water concessionaire sa publiko na gumawa ng paraan para makatipid sa paggamit ng tubig.

Nabatid na nag abiso na rin ang Manila Water na magpapatupad ng rotational service interruption.

Sinabi ni NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr. na nasa minimum operating level na 180 meter ang Angat dam na nasa normal na lebel pa naman kaya lamang ay dapat na i-manage at mapaghandaan ang mga pangangailangan sa susunod na buwan para hindi na umano maulit ang nangyari nitong taon na nagkaroon ng krisis sa tubig. **(Juliet de Loza-Cudia)**



DENR tutuldukan ang illegal mining

PRAYORIDAD ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na tuldukan ang ilegal na pagmimina sa ating bansa na perhuwisyo sa inang-kalikasan. Dapat lang dahil hindi na masukat ang pinsalang dulot nito lala sa mga residents ng mga lugar na may ilegal at iresponsableng pagmimina. Wika nga ni Atty. Wilfredo Moncano, Director ng Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB), walang puwang sa bansa ang ganitong aktibidad. Nauna nang naghayag ng galit ang Pangulong Duterte sa pag-iral ng illegal mining sa bansa kaya pursigido ang

DENR na wakasan ito.

Ayon kay Moncano, ito ay alinsunod sa isang matagal nang kampanya ng MGB upang paigtingin ang maayos na rehabilitasyon ng mining sites at pangangalaga sa kalikasan ng Philippine mining industry. Aniya, nagpatupad na ang MGB ng mga bagong polisiya para rito katuwang ang pambansang pulisya at iba pang law enforcement agencies.

Sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang administrasyon, inilunsad ng MGB ang National Task Force Mining Challenge (NTFMC) noong January 16, 2018 upang itigil ang iligal na pagmimina sa bansa. Ani Moncano, ang NTFMC ay nagsisilbing Environmental Enforcement Task Force.

Nagtatanod na rin ang MGB laban sa paglabag sa mga batas na may kaugnayan sa pagtotroso, agrikultura, wildlife protection, at iba pa.

Layunin din ng MGB ang ibaba ang bilang ng mga iligal na mining operators sa pamamagitan ng mga Minahang Bayan.

Sa ilalim ng People's Small-Scale Mining Act, ang Minahang Bayan ay kooperatiba ng mga small-scale mines na nakikipagtulungan para sa mas mainam na operasyon

(Sundan sa pahina 5)

AKSYON NGAYON... Mula pahina 4

katuwang ang pamahalaan.

Higit pa sa Minahang Bayan, hinihikayat din ng pamahalaan na sumunod ang mga small-scale mining operators sa mga regulasyon at pumasok sa ligal na merkado sa pamamagitan ng pag-waive ng buwis sa ginto.

"We tried taxing before,"

ani Moncano, "But that resulted in a 99% drop in domestic gold purchases."

"We really must be more collaborative," paliwanag niya. "We can't just tax and punish, we have to reward also, in order to strengthen our environmental protection and management of the mining industry," dagdag ni Moncano.



Reforestation crucial to PH climate change efforts

As countries around the world endeavor to prevent the global climate crisis from reaching catastrophic levels by 2030, reforestation remains a basic but vital strategy in mitigating climate change. A study by academic journal Science revealed that one billion hectares of forest could reduce 300 gigatons of carbon or 25 percent in the atmosphere.

In the Philippines, restoring forest cover is not only a matter of climate solution but of environmental survival. According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Forest Management Bureau (DENR-FMB), every year, the country loses 47,000 hectares of forest cover. Around 1.2 million hectares of denuded and degraded forest lands of the country need to be rehabilitated by 2022 to prevent landslides and ensure water availability.

In the private sector, renewable energy leader Energy Development Corporation (EDC) is at the forefront in responding to these challenges, leveraging its flagship environmental program BINHI to reforest degraded lands, rescue vanishing native trees, develop ecotourism areas and provide livelihood to local communities.

Since its launch in 2011, EDC's BINHI has successfully restored 9,500 hectares of forest land with 96 premium native trees species under threat of extinction. This year, the program is expanding its scale to increase the Philippines' forest cover. In its recent celebration of BINHI Day, EDC's facilities across the country – the Mt. Apo Geothermal Project, Leyte Geothermal Project, the EDC-Burgos Wind Power Corporation, Bacon-Manito Geothermal Project, Southern Negros Geothermal Project and EDC Head Office – rallied employees, community members and other institutional partners to plant more trees in their respective areas. A total of 10,578 trees were planted across the different sites.

BINHI's partners for these tree planting activities included the DENR and the Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices, local government units, schools, barangays and even volunteers from the military.



SEIZED GIANT CLAMS — Personnel of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) — Central Visayas, Philippine Air Force (PAF) Intelligence Unit, and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Region 7 inspect the more than two tons of giant clams, or locally called 'Taklobo', which were seized in Cordova, Cebu. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

₱36-million worth of 'taklobo' seized in Cordova, Cebu

By **CALVIN CORDOVA**

CEBU CITY — Fossilized giant clams, or "Taklobo," amounting to ₱36 million, were seized by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) — Central Visayas and personnel of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) in separate barangays in Cordova town, Cebu.

The giant clams were confiscated from a couple and three others persons in separate operations in Barangay Catarman and Barangay Day-as last Wednesday.

NBI 7 regional director Tomas Enrile said charges for violation of Republic Act 10654, or the Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, have been filed against George Oldama and his wife Bebing Oldama, Rowena Tajanlangit and two other men.

Enrile said it took a month of monitoring to confirm that the suspects were selling giant clams.

The NBI 7 director said the clams were being sold for ₱18,000 to ₱20,000 per kilo.

Following the operations, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Central Visayas (BFAR Region 7) Director Alfeo Piloton appealed to the public to report immediately to authorities persons possessing or collecting fossilized giant clams.

Piloton said collecting, possessing or selling fossilized giant clams are strictly prohibited under existing laws.

BFAR 7 said fossilized giant clams are also protected under international policies, particularly listed under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) Appendix II.



Water firms hosed down anew

By Francis T. Wakefield

Amid warnings from water concessionaires of shortage of supply and their petition contesting a Supreme Court (SC) ruling slapping billions of penalties against them, President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday night lashed out at the

companies for their failure to put up treatment plants despite continued collection of fees from customers.

In an address to the 45th Philippine Business Conference and Expo at the Manila Hotel, the President lamented the fact that the Filipino people have been

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So, let us not forget the environment. I think these guys do not like me and I do not like them

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paying for water treatment fees, which has not been delivered by the water companies.

Mr. Duterte made the remarks without naming names, but he was apparently referring to Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc.

At the same time, the President urged business groups to help protect nature as he took a swipe at the water firms.

"So, let us not forget the environment. Like these... I am not sure what. I think these guys do not like me and I do not like them," the President said.

"We've been paying, the Filipino people, Manila. We have been paying for a water treatment fee. In our water bills, that has been included. In truth, that area there should have been water treatment. You know they keep on collecting," he added.

The Chief Executive added, "Up to now, there is no water treatment. The water in the canal, it passes through a nylon mosquito... but there is no water treatment and yet we are paying."

This was not the first time that the Chief Executive lashed at the water companies for their failure to put up treatment facilities.

Plunderous practice

In an exclusive pre-State of the Nation Address interview with *Daily Tribune*, Mr. Duterte said the public can even sue both private firms for "plunder" since they have been collecting fees for services that they do not provide.

The President even threatened to terminate the concession agreement with the water companies for poor services.

In August, the SC slapped Maynilad, Manila Water and the government-run Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) with massive fines for their failure to comply with the Clean Water Act.

Nearly P1B in fines

The SC imposed a total of P921,464,184 in fines each against MWSS and Maynilad, which was the same fine imposed on Manila Water and also to MWSS.

They were also fined P322,102.00 per day for every day of noncompliance with the Clean Water Act, stemming from a case filed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources during the term of former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The case stemmed from the failure of Maynilad and Manila Water to put up sewage lines and sewage treatment facilities despite charging millions of households for such service, and according to reports the fines piled up because the law imposes a daily fine for each infraction.

Both Maynilad and Manila Water have filed separate motions for reconsideration before the SC contesting its ruling even as they threatened to pass the penalties imposed against them to the customers.

In fact, both companies said that a 780 percent increase in their water rates is in the offing if the SC ruling is implemented.

The 74-year-old

Chief Executive was able to grace the event at Manila Hotel after he was involved in a minor motorcycle accident at the compound of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) in Malacañang, Wednesday night.

He was joined on stage by Ma. Sibal Limjoco, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI); Dr. William S. Co, chairman of the 45th PBC&E (WSC);

and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Ramon Lopez.

We have been paying for a water treatment fee. In our water bills, that has been included.

The President took the event as an opportunity to solicit the help of the business sector in the government's fight against corruption.

"I need badly the cooperation of the business sector. I am telling you, if there is somebody, just a mere whisper about corruption, just let me know. I need your input to better serve my country and thereby fulfill what I promised to the people," Mr. Duterte said.



Writ shields fragile ecology

A petition for the issuance of Writ of *Kalikasan* was needed to permanently stop the reclamation of the Bacoor-Las Piñas-Parañaque coastline to save the wetland's Critical Habitat and Ecotourism

Area, Sen. Cynthia Villar reiterated yesterday.

In a letter to *Daily Tribune*, the lawmaker also raised the need to ensure that residents

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of three neighboring cities be spared of the possibility of massive flooding.

Villar, who garnered the most number of votes among senators in the recent midterm elections, remained firm on the need to halt the major reclamation of the 635.14-hectare area along the Bacoor-Las Piñas-Parañaque coastline as the project would allegedly endanger communities.

She fears flooding would worsen along the portions serving as water basin of the Las Piñas, Zapote and Parañaque rivers.

To hit bird habitat

The senator said 431.71 hectares of wetland in Las Piñas and 203.43 hectares in Parañaque will form part of the project. This stretch, Villar said, is a critical bird habitat.

In her missive, Villar said the project would encroach upon the Las Piñas-Parañaque critical habitat and ecotourism area. She said 82 species of birds, including those in the endangered list, and eight species of mangrove would be threatened by the project.

She also disclosed that the area had been declared a "Wetland of National Importance" under

the Ramsar Convention, or the Convention for the Conservation of Wetlands.

Ecological concern raised

This, she said, underscored the significance of the preservation of threatened wildlife species and the critical role the area plays in the earth's overall ecology.

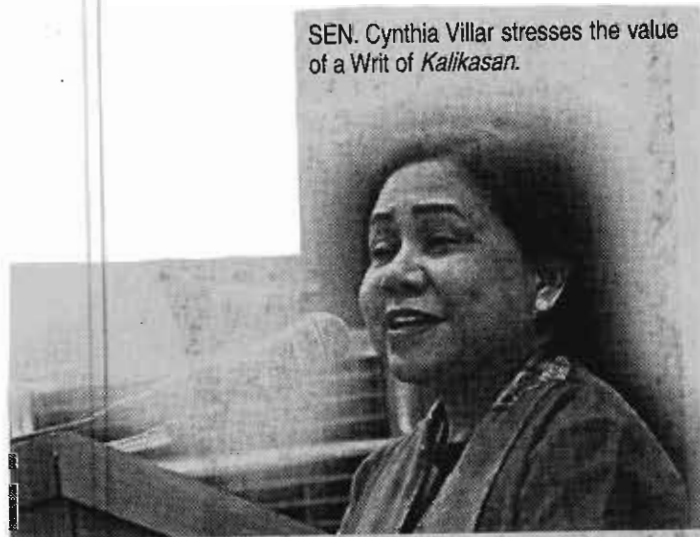
The Philippines is among the countries that have committed to the Ramsar Convention in 1971.

It was also declared a protected area under Republic Act 11038 of the Expanded National Integrated Protected Area Systems (E-NIPAS) Act in June last year.

Villar raised the need to ensure that residents of three neighboring cities be spared of the possibility of massive flooding.

Villar wanted Alltech Contractors Inc., the Philippine Reclamation Authority and the local governments of Las Piñas and Parañaque to stop the project, which had initially attracted the potential construction of an airport, which business mogul Ramon S. Ang decided to transfer to Bulacan.

SEN. Cynthia Villar stresses the value of a Writ of *Kalikasan*.



Writ shields fragile ecology

She remained firm on the need to halt the major reclamation of the 635.14-hectare area along the Bacoor-Las Piñas-Parañaque coastline



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DENR employee caught in pot session

THE Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency has nabbed a Department of Environment and Natural Resources employee while having a pot session in South Cotabato.

Director General Aaron Aquino identified the suspect as Walter John Domingo, a 35-year-old forest ranger.

He, however, said Domingo's cohort, Clyde Muninio, managed to evade arrest.

On Oct. 14, a confidential informant tipped the operatives who were at the suspects' place for a supposed buy-bust operation in Banga, Barangay Sta. Cruz, Tampakan, but the target drug personality did not appear.

Authorities were able to confiscate one plastic sachet of shabu worth P680 and several drug paraphernalia. **Rio N. Araja**



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Tree cutting in two Cebu cities halted

Governor Garcia cites consensus to reassess road expansion project

By Dale G. Israel
@dalegisraelINQ

CEBU CITY—The cutting of trees in Naga and Carcar cities in south Cebu was suspended to give way to an inspection and reassessment of the state of the affected trees.

“There is a possibility that there really is no need to cut all of those trees [in Naga City],” said Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, who met with the mayors of the two cities and the regional officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).



There is a possibility that there really is no need to cut all of those trees

Gwendolyn Garcia
Cebu Governor

to Carcar, she said she would again call for another round of discussions about the details.

Garcia earlier said she wanted to preserve the roadside trees but that she did not want to make promises she could not keep.

“We need to save the trees whenever we can. But let us first listen to our local chief executives as a sign of respect. I will not give promises that I cannot keep. And I will not also try to look good and sound good even if I am not doing good,” the governor told reporters on Wednesday.

“I know saving trees is a popular issue. Who would debate against it? And I agree we should save the trees whenever we can. It cannot be an all or nothing thing,” she said.

Two online petitions have been launched to protect the roadside trees.

Milk Joy Pactores, 25, a digital marketing manager based in Cebu, started a signature campaign to ask President Duterte and the DENR to stop the cutting of trees.

A similar petition in Change.org was spearheaded by Tingog Kinaiyahan. INQ

Tests to be conducted

Most of the 32 trees are either at the carriageways, or the side of the recently expanded four lanes, while some are at the pedestrian walks. No trees sit on top of the expanded lanes.

But Garcia said there was consensus among government agencies and the local governments to conduct a reassessment.

This means that the trees will be undergoing tests in the next two weeks to find out

their health and if they pose danger to motorists or residents.

The Natalio Bacalso South Highway in Cebu is the only road that stretches from Cebu City to the southernmost town of Santander. Although wider in the urban area, the road shrinks to two lanes going further down south.

Since the time of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the national government had planned to widen the sections of the road in Carcar and Naga.

Garcia gave assurance that the 32 trees would be spared whenever possible.

She said environmental advocates and netizens should not fear that the canopy of trees at Perrelos in Carcar would be gone as “they would not be cut.”

Have no fear

Carcar, she said, had no budget for a road expansion project in the 2020 General Appropriations Act.

If the road project extends



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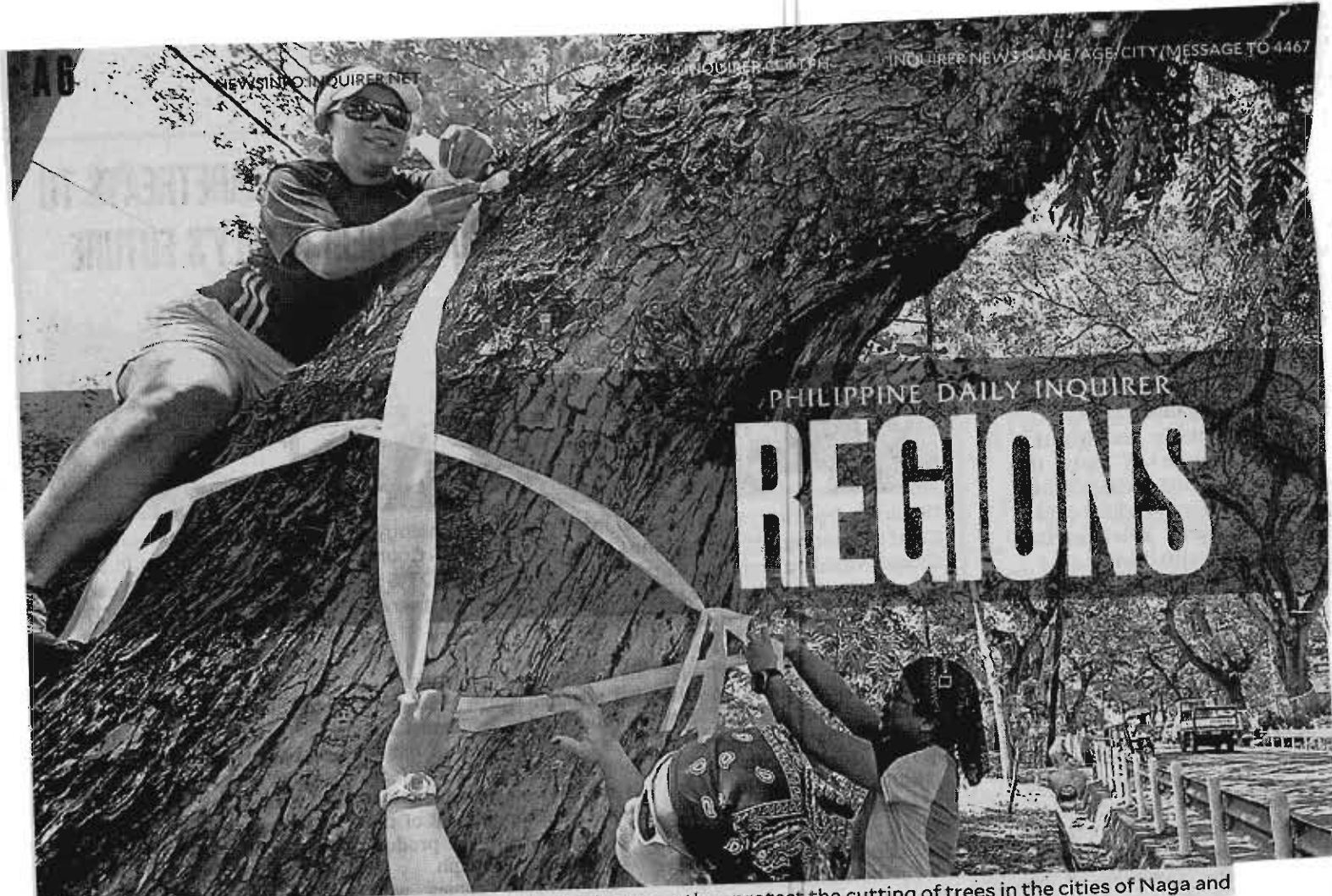
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LIFELINE Environmentalists tie a ribbon to the trunk of this tree as they protest the cutting of trees in the cities of Naga and

Carcar in this file photo. —INQUIRER PHOTO



1.3 M Filipinos boost green movement with GCash Forest

PLANTING a tree and seeing it grow is a lot of work — back-breaking work that requires grit and persistence, not to mention tender loving care.

But, possessed with a green thumb or not, over 1.3 million Filipinos are now putting their tap-happy fingers to work to help the country increase its forest cover through GCash Forest, a special feature on the GCash app that strives to boost reforestation efforts while building a cashless nation.

GCash Forest allows users to grow virtual trees that will have real-life counterparts at the Ipo Watershed, a primary source of Metro Manila's critical water supply. The watershed is losing forest cover at an alarming rate.

A personal carbon tracker, GCash Forest keeps tabs of how much carbon emission subscribers have avoided by choosing greener activities, which have corresponding "green energy" points that accumulate when done frequently.

Once GCash users have enough en-

ergy points, they can choose which native tree to plant in selected areas of the Ipo watershed. These areas are managed by GCash partner WWF-Philippines.

"We are truly inspired by the surge in the number of users joining our green movement and this continues to motivate us to help the country save our dying forests and fight climate change through our initiative," said Ney Villaseñor, chief corporate affairs officer of Mynt, the company that runs GCash.

Over 500,000 GCash users have since enlisted in GCash Forest from the time it was launched on June 25. This doubled to 1.3 million early this month, resulting in millions of grams of carbon emissions avoided, according to company estimates.

GCash hopes to plant at least 365,000 trees in one year to compensate for the roughly 620,000 trees lost every year since 1990.

For more information, visit mynt.xyz.

FEATURE

PH engineers build ecobricks with plastic waste

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THE Philippines is regarded as one of the “sachet economies,” or countries where products are packed, repacked and sold in one-off plastic packets.

According to a 2019 study by research agency Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), the country uses 60 billion plastic sachets every year.

“On a per capita basis, it’s about one sachet [a] person [a] day,” Froilan Grate of GAIA Asia Pacific said.

This fact has motivated a group of engineers and entrepreneurs to start in 2012 an initiative to repurpose sachets — an effective solution to the country’s plastic-waste problem.

This initiative led to the establishment of Green Antz Builders Inc., which produces eco-friendly construction hollow blocks called “ecobricks” out of plastic sachets and other non-recyclable wastes.

“Sachets are residual wastes; they are of no commercial value [and] they can’t even be sold to junk

shops. But we saw their potential. We decided to turn [discarded] sachets into something useful,” Green Antz Builders co-founder Mark Yulores told Xinhua.

An ecobrick is composed of 100 plastic laminates shredded and mixed with wet cement. This mixture is poured into a brick-pressing machine the group also invented. The finished product can be used to build houses, schools, and buildings.

Ecobricks look different from ordinary building blocks as they resemble Lego blocks. The plastic laminates act as an insulator that keeps out the heat that usually passes through normal hollow blocks, thus making ecobricks cooler and more durable.

“We did not just incorporate the plastic sachets so [that] we can call it a ‘green’ product. We saw a property

in those laminates that complement our innovation. And this formulation makes our ecobricks five times stronger than commercial alternatives,” Yulores said.

Yulores and his friends set up their first ecohub in Plaridel, Bulacan, where they produce over 20,000 ecobricks a month, disposing almost half a ton of sachets.

Positive reaction

By tapping public schools and communities, the group was able to encourage people to segregate their waste, collect plastic sachets and bring them to their ecohubs. Their involvement will not go unrewarded: every 2.5 kilos of the sachets they collect would get them a discount on the ecobricks they buy.

The reception was positive, leading the group to open a few more eco-stores, where people exchange the sachets they collected for food. This incentive system is helping Green Antz Builders

develop a chain reaction of good environmental practice.

“It’s a circular economy model. We take in their waste collection and convert that, but in return we give them a form of incentive, and then they help us in the demand side by using our ecobricks. The [greater the] demand, the more plastic we need to process,” Yulores said.

A community in Plaridel built a daycare center by collecting and donating their one-off plastics to Green Antz Builders. With discounted ecobricks, the local government unit not only saved money, but also provided a sustainable learning facil-

ity for children.

“We are very glad that they helped us put up our center. This is a very ideal project, a first in our community. Because you can never realize that out of trash we can build something like this,” said Teresa Viernes of the town’s social welfare office.

Green Antz is no longer alone in their cause. Private construction companies have started to partner with them, building 10 ecohubs all over the country. The group hopes to build 90 more by 2020.

While the country is far from solving its plastic waste problem, there are initiatives emerging from

local communities to help address it.

One of them, a recycling company in Davao City, is addressing the shortage of school chairs by converting plastic waste into useful furniture. Thirty kilos of plastic build one chair, which is seen as a significant contribution to the city that handles 500 to 600 tons of trash every day, most of which end up in waterways.

A village in Muntinlupa City has also offered rice to residents in exchange for plastic. The initiative, which started in August, has collected more than 500 kilos of plastic waste.

XINHUA



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PH engineers build...

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■ A man operates a brick-pressing machine that mixes shredded sachet laminates with wet cement to produce an ecobrick at a facility run by Green Antz Builders Inc. in Taguig City. XINHUA PHOTO



The Pisonia tree lures and murders birds for no good reason

By **JOANIE FALETTA**

JUST because you can doesn't mean you should. Someone should tell that to the Pisonia tree, a savage plant that kills birds just for the fun of it. You may be asking, "Why?" Well, the tree would respond, "Why not?"

Oh Murder Tree, Oh Murder Tree!

If you didn't think a plant — a tree, no less — could be a jerk, think again. Found in the tropical waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans, the Pisonia tree fits the bill as one of the most unnecessarily cruel plants out there. While it's

not uncommon for plants to have built-in defense mechanisms, those things are usually there to keep the plant safe. But scientists have yet to uncover any benefit the Pisonia tree could possibly receive for luring birds in only to murder them.

Here's what happens at the crime scene: The Pisonia tree produces sticky seedpods that trap insects, luring in hungry birds with the promise of an easy lunch. These seedpods are so sticky that they'll latch onto any bird that flies into them, either trapping it in the tree's branches or weighing the bird down so much that it's completely unable to fly. As a result, you'll see a spread of bird carcasses



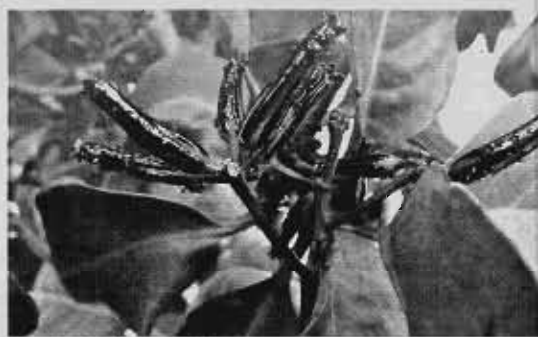
Noddy Tern covered in pisonia seeds | Cam Pervan/Flickr

littering the roots of the Pisonia tree. There are sometimes even mummified bird corpses up in the branches that look like, as Washington Post describes them, "macabre Christmas tree ornaments."

I'm Tellin' ya'll, It's Sab-

otage

Ecologist Alan Burger at the University of Victoria first heard of the Pisonia in the 1990s and went to the archipelago of Seychelles in the Indian Ocean to figure out why these slaughterous trees seemed to kill.



David Eickhoff/Flickr

Until then, no one had looked too hard into the Pisonia tree, but there were two main theories as to why they were bird-tormentors: either the tree's roots got a nutrient bump from the dead birds, or the seeds attached to the dead birds

because they required the corpse as fertilizer in order to grow. After 10 months of research with the Pisonia seeds, Burger published his findings in 2005.

The conclusion? Pisonia trees are straight ruthless. "The results

from my experiments showed quite convincingly that the Pisonia derived no obvious benefit from fatally entangling birds," writes Burger.

Not only did dead birds not benefit the tree in any way, but the poop of living birds would also help the trees survive by enriching the soil. It turns out, then, that killing birds isn't necessarily the goal. Birds flying away from the tree with sticky seeds attached helps keep the tree species alive by spreading the seeds far and wide. It's just one of those evolutionary whoopsies that the seeds sprout in clusters — heavy, self-sabotaging, bird-murdering clusters.



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The role of the youth in achieving SDGs

WE live today in an era of a climate emergency that threatens nothing less than the long-term viability of nations all over the world. It is not overly dramatic to describe the problem this way because science provides the clear warning.

Last year, the world's top climate science body — the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — confirmed that we are already seeing the consequences of 1-degree Celsius (C) of global warming.

According to the report, anything beyond 1.5C, even half a degree of a warming, will significantly worsen climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth.

Limiting global warming to 1.5C will require rapid and far-reaching transitions, especially in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities. However, current pledges and targets scenario will still lead us to a 3C level of warming by 2100.

In a way, we can understand why some are hesitant to make rapid changes. We see climate change as a "tragedy of the commons" problem, in which costs are borne by countries that act, while benefits are shared by future generations and citizens from other distant countries.

Because of this, the outcome shouldn't surprise us: countries do much less than is needed, leaving the 1.5C global goal under the Paris Agreement far out of reach.



ALL ABOUT CHOICES

LUDWIG O. FEDERIGAN

The Philippines and the Paris Agreement

As you know, the Paris Agreement is a landmark international framework for global action, which aims to limit global warming at 1.5C above pre-industrial levels; enhance adaptive capacity and climate resilience; and ensure financing for climate-resilient and low carbon development. For the agreement to enter into force by 2020, 55 parties representing at least 55 percent of global emissions must ratify it. As of September 18, 2016, 180 countries have already signed the agreement. Twenty-eight countries have already ratified the agreement, which represents 39 percent of the global greenhouse gases emissions.

The Philippines is one of the 180 countries that signed the agreement. On Earth Day, April 22, 2016, the Philippine government signed it during a high-level signing ceremony at the United Nations in New York City. To be considered to have joined the Paris Agreement, presidential ratification and Senate concurrence are required.

During the 21st Conference of Parties in Paris, France, the

Philippines, at that time, was also the chairman of the Climate Vulnerable Forum — an international partnership of developing countries that are identified as the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The Philippines, then, was deemed as a key actor in representing the interest of these countries, and was instrumental in championing and achieving the following during the negotiations:

First, a climate goal that limits global warming to 1.5C.

When the 1.5-C climate goal was put on the table for discussion, it was deemed as a romantic but ultimately doomed notion. There was resistance from developed countries to even consider this goal. However, we stood our ground and soldiered on because we know that beyond the 1.5-C goal, we will have unacceptable losses and irreparable damages. We tirelessly negotiated with other countries. We made other countries that were not originally favorable to this goal, be onboard with the climate goal. Our numbers grew and our voices were heard. And when the goal was officially set in the agreement, it was a victory, not just for us, but for everyone. What was viewed as a romantic and elusive goal is now the benchmark of global climate ambition and action.

Second, the recognition that climate change impacts impinge on human rights, particularly on our people's right to life and health.

Third, the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems,

including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity in addressing climate change.

Fourth, the emphasis on gender equality and the rights of indigenous people, migrants and children in implementing climate policies.

Fifth, the development and implementation of comprehensive risk assessment in addressing further loss and damage.

And sixth, the provision of grant-based financing for developing countries in implementing climate change measures.

Our success in the international arena shall reflect in our actions on the ground. This is where we will be needing you.



The role of the youth...

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Role of the youth in Sustainable Development Goals

People of all ages are responsible in creating a sustainable and healthy planet. But it is the youth who may have the most to win or lose on whether we achieve targets for sustainable living. This gives them much more chances to speak their voices and take action to assure their future continues to be safe and sustainable.

With the world set to have the largest youth population ever in the coming years, we really need to start thinking on how to mobilize their talent and capacity to make better decisions and influence the government when they become leaders of this nation.

The future totally depends on

the decisions made by the youth — and in turn, these decisions will ultimately have an impact on themselves in future, as they are the one who has the most time to spend in the future, and their children as well.

They will be the ones who will find solutions to the problems the older generation has failed to respond to — especially climate change — number 13 on the SDGs.

The youth plays a critical role in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. How can you do this very challenging task?

First, you must understand what the SDGs are for and the methodologies and strategies used to achieve these goals.

Second, you are called to raise awareness. The momentum is already there. Lots of conventions and negotiations were commenced. All you have to do is learn how to sustain it and move forward. As your mentors, we will guide you every step of the way. With your access to social media, you have the power to act and mobilize others by raising awareness.

Third, innovate. The youth have the capability to identify and challenge existing efforts, and break through barriers as you have the capacity to bring fresh perspectives.

Fourth, communicate. You can initiate dialogues events and workshops that would enable people from different sectors can work together to create more efficient,

practical and innovative solutions toward achieving a common goal.

We share the same aim: We must not only survive but also thrive in a climate change-constrained world, which is the 13th goal in the SDG.

We need to do everything we can to contribute to the global goal of limiting warming to below 1.5C relative to pre-industrial levels.

To do this, we need to work with all sectors, including the youth, in taking a whole of government and whole of society approach. It is within our power to make this time the time for transformative action. It is the youth that can make or break the pathway to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

We have to keep ourselves grounded on the very core of our advocacy: to ensure the lives and livelihoods of our people and to ensure a sustainable future for our children and their children.

This article is part of the message delivered during The 2030 Project's Leaders Unite 2019 Mindanao held in Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City.

The author is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (USA). He can be emailed at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.



'Surprise! Climate activists declare UN climate summit a failure'

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First word

THE title comes straight from an essay in the Watts Up With That (WUWT) website, the most viewed site on climate change.

The news will distress the climate alarmists among my readers, and surprise even climate skeptics like myself. My team of researchers and I discovered this startling piece of news during our research. It was written by Earl Worrall, an insider in the climate change movement.

Worrall titled his essay, "Surprise! Climate activists declare UN New York climate conference a failure."

Since I ran an earlier column on a skeptical Politico report on the conference ("UN climate summit proves a failure; UN running out of funds," *The Manila Times*, Oct. 10, 2019), I should similarly give space to the climate activists' assessment of the summit.

I reprint Worrall's essay, published in WUWT on Sept. 25, 2019, in full to keep our records up to date.

Worrall: UN climate summit a failure

"Poor greens — despite Greta's



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tears, the delegates barely pretended they cared. (The succeeding italicized text are quoted by Worrall from Mabey, 24 Sept. — ed)

"After failure in New York, we must reshape the politics of climate change

"Comment: Climate denial is no longer the problem, it is the inaction of politicians who know what is at stake. They must feel pressure from all sides.

"The UN Climate Action Summit in New York finally took the temperature on the global politics of climate action. (Nick Mabey)

"Spoiler alert — it wasn't hot enough.

"The summit also triggered the diplomatic starting gun for the next set of critical climate decisions coming in 2020 at COP26 in Glasgow. With so much climate pollution in the atmosphere, without a big increase in action at Glasgow it will

be practically impossible to keep climate change within safe limits.

"People are fired up for action from those with power and authority. Unfortunately, the lukewarm outcomes from the UN Climate Action Summit give little faith that the mercury is rising in the halls of power.

"Despite the UN secretary general going far beyond the usual diplomatic niceties — only allowing leaders announcing real commitments a platform — the response from major polluters was virtually non-existent. If solutions are cheaper, public opinion is mobilized and impacts much clearer, why is political action not following?

"In most countries more people want climate action than not. Anti-climate action forces are societally weak but focused; pro-climate action forces are potentially powerful but poorly organized. The problem is not how to raise awareness, but how to align these forces to make

an impact on the thousands of decisions needed to reshape our economies and societies.

"If people really are fired up for change, why isn't the Green party running the country? Why aren't green politicians running every country?

"The reason of course is because ordinary people have other priorities. Some of them might demand a bit of lip service on climate action, but they are completely uninterested in climate action which costs money, like paying carbon taxes.

"But if you are a green you can't accept this simple, self-evident fact. If you are a green;

"1. You believe claims that renewable energy is cheaper than coal, but massive government intervention is required because a conspiracy of fossil fuel tycoons is stopping the world from embracing the cheaper option.

"2. You believe the people demand climate action, but politicians those same people elect and repeatedly elect are failing to prioritize the climate

► MakabentaA5

action demanded by the people who voted for them.

"3. You believe walking to work or taking the bus is an important symbolic act, despite owning or renting a house full of energy guzzling plastic appliances. And of course you still (mostly) own a car. And flying to holiday destinations or climate events is OK.

"4. You believe the world is going to end in 12 years (11 years? or is it all a joke? hard to keep track), but you still work your everyday job, live your normal life, and have an occasional crying fit about how awful it all is.

"5. You believe that if your friends mess up enough people's lives by stopping traffic on busy work days, you will build an irresistible momentum for a green revolution."

With such a verdict from the activists, who would pronounce the UN summit a success? UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres?

Who will bear now the torch of climate change and climate apocalypse?

Population bomb crashes against world system

Climate alarmists are now experiencing the disappointment of population alarmists when their oracle of global disaster was proved false.

In 1968, Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich published *The Population Bomb* (Ballantine Books, New York, 1968), wherein he predicted worldwide famine in the 1970s and 1980s because of overpopulation, and other societal upheavals. He advocated immediate action to limit population growth. The book was subtitled: "Population control or race to oblivion."

Ehrlich opened his book with this statement: "The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s, hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs

embarked upon now. At this late date nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate."

The book has been criticized since its publication for its alarmist tone, and in recent decades for its inaccurate predictions.

Jonathan Last called *Bomb* "one of the most spectacularly foolish books ever published."

Believers in the population explosion were dazed and orphaned when world conditions and agriculture proved Ehrlich spectacularly wrong. Many nations now worry about their aging populations and zero or negative population growth.

Climate alarmists are in a similar situation today. The church of global warming may no longer have a message to evangelize.



'Surprise! Climate activists declare ...

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More scientists sign no-emergency declaration

Mike Billington of the *Executive*

Intelligence Review graciously sent me a most welcome update on the European Climate Declaration sent by scientists to the UN secretary general, which flatly declared: "There is no climate emergency."

Mike wrote me as follows:

"At the end of this post is a link to the 500 [and growing] leading world scientists who refute the anthropogenic cause of climate change, who deny CO2 is a 'pollutant,' and insist that following the London bankers demand that we stop using hydrocarbons will be a disaster for mankind. Please take the time to 'google' the scientists, to give you a sense that these are among the most prestigious leaders in the world of science."

He attached 1) A copy of the declaration; 2) n updated listing of the signatories and their countries of residence; and 3) the print version of an article on the climate declaration in

the Oct. 4, 2019 issue of the *EIR*.

The full list of 506 signers (<https://larouchepub.com/other/2019/4639-euro-climate-declaration.pdf>) as of September 26), includes EU scientists and professionals from Belgium (19), Czech Republic (1), Denmark (4), France (56), Germany (13), Ireland (15), Italy (113), Netherlands (57), Norway (17), Poland (3), Sweden (18), Switzerland (2), and UK (22). There are signers from nations beyond the European Union: Australia (75), Brazil (7), Canada (17), China (2), India (1), Japan (1), New Zealand (14), Russian Federation (1), South Africa (3), and the US (45).

Secretary-General Guterres has not replied to the scientists' letter. It is doubtful whether he will agree to convene a meeting of the UN climate scientists in the IPCC and the top signatories of the no-emergency declaration, so they can argue their respective views on the climate issue.

Quo vadis, climate alarmism?

The dynamic in the New York summit is not likely to change in coming conferences called by the UN for climate action.

COP25 (the Conference of the Parties) will take place from Dec. 2 to 13, 2019 in Santiago, Chile.

Nobel laureate Al Gore, the pope of global warming, surprisingly did not show up at the New York summit. He has been silent on climate lately. The latest report says that Gore has joined top US Democrats in calling for the impeachment of Donald Trump.

As for Swedish climate activist, Greta Thunberg, who is touted as the new face of global warming, he air appears to have oozed out of her balloon. She was bypassed by the Nobel committee in its selection of the 2019 Nobel peace laureate. She is nowhere in the media these days.

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