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Build waste treatment facilities, Duterte tells private firms

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

President Duterte reminded private companies to follow environmental laws, saying taking care of the environment is one of his administration's priorities.

In a speech early this week, Duterte said taking care of the environment is everyone's duty.

Private companies can help the government by building waste treatment facilities, the President said, adding the Philippines has been paying for its water to get treated.

"You can contribute by helping us build more disposal sites for our waste and treatment facilities. And for

wastewater and farms to produce food to nourish our people in the years to come," Duterte said.

"We have been paying for a water treatment fee... Hanggang ngayon, walang water treatment. 'Yung tubig sa canal, dumadaan lang ng ilang nylon na mosquitero 'yan (Until now there is no water treatment. The water from the canal just passes through a few nylons). But there is no water treatment and yet we are paying," he added.

"The environment is a priority under my administration. Business should not only comply with all environmental rules and regulations but shall also take part of taking care of the environment. This is your duty as citizens of this country," he said.

"I have been mentioned several times. Well, in any business you'll always have a waste. Maski wala kang negosyo, umagang-umaga may waste ka eh (Even if you don't have a business, by morning you already produce waste). So let us not forget the environment," he added.

During the launch of a coal-fired power plant early this week, Duterte said he directed the Departments of Energy (DOE) and of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to make sure that power generators follow the law.

The President also assured the private sector that they can conduct their business freely as long as they take care of the environment and the communities where they are located.

"I am thus directing our relevant government agencies, especially the [DENR] and the DOE, to remain vigilant in monitoring the compliance of power generation companies with existing laws and regulations," Duterte said.

"With substantial reforms that this

administration has instituted in the past three years, I can assure you that you'll be able to pursue more effective and efficient business strategies as long as you give utmost importance for the protection of our environment and the welfare of your host communities," he added.



Follow environmental laws – Rody

President Duterte has reminded private companies to follow environmental laws, saying taking care of the environment is one of his administration's priorities.

In a speech during an event Thursday at the historic landmark Manila Hotel, Duterte said that taking care of the environment was everyone's duty.

"The environment is a priority under my administration. Business should not only comply with all environmental rules and regulations but shall also take part of taking care of the environment. This is your duty as citizens of this country," he said.

"I have been mentioned several times. Well, in any business you'll always have a waste. Maski wala kang negosyo, umagang-umaga may waste ka eh. So let us not forget the environment," he added.

According to the President, private companies can help the government by building waste treatment facilities, saying the Philippines has been paying for its water to get treated.

"You can contribute by helping us build more disposal sites for our waste and treatment facilities. And for wastewater and farms to produce food to nourish our people in the years to come," Duterte said.

"We have been paying for a water treatment fee... Hanggang ngayon, walang water treatment. 'Yung tubig sa canal, dumadaan lang ng ilang nylon na mosquitero 'yan. But there is no water treatment and yet we are paying," he added.

During the launching of a coal-fired power plant in Taguig City last Wednesday, Duterte said he directed the departments of Energy and the Environment and Natural Resources to make sure that power generators follow the law.

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ANGAT WATER LEVEL STILL RECEDING

WATER level in Angat Dam, the reservoir that supplies Metro Manila and nearby provinces with water, has been plunging daily since the start of October. As of 1 p.m. Saturday, the elevation level of Angat Dam was 187.26 meters.

Hydrologist Richard Orendain of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said this in an interview on Super Radyo dzBB, heard nationwide.

The last time when the dam experienced a rise in its levels due to rainfall, according to Orendain, was during the first two days of October.

"We need at least 212 meters at the end of the year in preparation for the dry season next year," he said in Filipino.

Angat is the reservoir which supplies about 90 percent of raw water requirements for Metro Manila through the facilities of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and it irrigates about 28,000 hectares of farmland in Bulacan and Pampanga.

The dam is 131 meters high and impounds water from the Angat River that subsequently created the Angat Lake.

Angat Dam has a normal high water level of 210 meters, according to the PAGASA.

It has three gates opening a total of 1.5 meters to gradually release water that had accumulated due to incessant rains during typhoons.

Orendain, who advised the public to conserve and recycle water, added the projected level by the end of October should be 200 meters.



Demystifying fish kill, shellfish mortality in Manila Bay

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

DURING the celebration of World Food Day on October 16, fishermen belonging to the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya (Pamalakaya) highlighted the importance of Manila Bay as their primary source of income and livelihood.

The group underscored the need to protect and conserve the historic bay—which stretches from Cavite to Bataan—a traditional fishing ground of small fishermen in Luzon and a major source of food that helps fill the country's food basket.

No less than the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) identified Manila Bay as "a spawning area of sardines" and one of the major fishing grounds of small fishermen.

However, the call to protect Manila Bay against destructive development projects came amid a massive fish kill in Las Piñas and Parañaque, and the shellfish mortality affecting mussel farms in Bacoor and Sangley Point, Cavite, on October 9.

The fish kill and shellfish mortality occurred at a time when the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) claimed that water quality in some areas have improved significantly, heralding the success of the ongoing rehabilitation efforts to save Manila Bay.

Rich biodiversity

MANILA BAY remains to be a rich fishing ground that is able to support the livelihood of small fishermen if protected against illegal fishing methods and other destructive development activities like a massive land reclamation that threatens coastal areas, including Manila, Pasay, Las Piñas, Parañaque and Navotas.

The ocean conservation advocacy nongovernment organization Oceana Philippines recently cited the discovery of a new sardine species, called *Sardinella pacifica* as a reason to protect Manila Bay and other areas in the country against land reclamation also called dump and-fill.

However, in a news release on October 14, the DENR said over 200 sacks and over 5,000 kilograms of various marine species, such as fish, shrimps and crabs were collected from the shores of Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park (LPPWP).

At least 33 marine species, including tilapia, *talakitok*, sapsap, *lapu-lapu*, eel, *malakapas*, crab and shrimp, were among those found dead.

Suspected cause of death

MYSTERY shrouds the fish kill and shellfish mortality in the areas. The Las Piñas and Parañaque portion of Manila Bay, which is close to LPPWP, is known to be polluted.

Many areas near the shore, particularly along Roxas Boulevard, have a high concentration of fecal coliform even before, yet assorted fish species thrive in these areas.

The LPPWP, formerly known as the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, is a Ramsar Site or wetland of international importance.

According to reports released by the DA-BFAR, the fish kill in Las Piñas and Parañaque could have been caused by poor levels of dissolved oxygen and higher levels of ammonia and phosphates than the standard level.

Laboratory test results

THE report was based on water quality test conducted by the DA-BFAR Fishery Law Enforcement-Quick Response Team a day after the fish kill was reported.

For dissolved oxygen, the standard parameter is >5.0 (greater than 5.0) ppm, but the three sampling areas—one in San Dionisio and two in Bay City—showed dissolved oxygen the lower level of 0.70, 2.0, and 0.70, respectively.

For ammonia, the standard level is 0.05 ppm but laboratory tests showed they were way above standard—San Dionisio was 3.59 ppm; Bay City, 1.29 and 1.68, respectively.

For phosphate, the standard parameter is <0.5 (lower than 0.5) ppm, but the laboratory test results were at extremely high levels—San Dionisio was at 6.45 ppm, and 7.11 and 8.28 ppm in the two Bay City sampling sites.

Fatal chemicals

THE DA-BFAR Information and Public Relations Group said ammonia is a chemical compound produced naturally from decomposing organic matter, including plants, animals and animal waste.

The ammonia in the water samples, however, might have also come from agricultural, domestic and industrial wastes, the report says.

Phosphate, on the other hand, is one of the primary nutrient sources for many forms of algae, and could come from sources like domestic sewage and runoff from agricultural land, urban areas and green areas.

"These chemicals, at high levels, may cause detrimental effects to the fish which may result in fish kill," the report said.

Meanwhile, based on the scientific examination conducted by BFAR-4A Regional Fisheries Protection and Law Enforcement Group (BFAR4A-FPLEG), the fish mortality was not caused by blast or dynamite fishing.

Dead 'tahong'

ON October 14, the DA-BFAR said that based on initial laboratory report, the salinity level in the areas, which ranged from 19 ppt to 25 ppt, is lower than the required level for shellfish to survive, which is 27 ppt to 35 ppt.



Demystifying fish kill, shellfish mortality in Manila Bay

"The heavy rainfall in the past few days might have triggered the water salinity to drop," the report revealed. The tests were made by the BFAR4A-FPLEG, the BFAR National Fisheries Laboratory Division, and technical personnel from BFAR-4A in Bacoor and Sangley Point.

The laboratory tests also showed that dissolved oxygen levels in the sampling areas were low, but high concentrations of ammonia and phosphates were detected.

Like in its report on the fish kill in Las Piñas, the DA-BFAR said high levels of ammonia and phosphates may cause detrimental effects to fish and other marine life.

Yet, despite the shellfish mortality affecting mussel farms, consumption of shellfish from the said fishing ground is safe, the DA-BFAR said.

However, it advised that only live shellfish should be collected and washed properly before cooking.

Natural phenomenon

DA-BFAR-4A Regional Director Sammy A. Malvas said their interviews in the affected areas revealed that fishermen are not oblivious to fish kill or shellfish mortality.

"When it is hot and it suddenly rains, mussel dies. This normally happens," he said.

Supporting the laboratory findings, he said the excessive rainfall in the past few days led to the decrease in the level of salinity, resulting in

shellfish mortality.

"Mussel, or shellfish, in general, does not survive in low salinity," he said.

He believes that for the shellfish mortality, salinity is the main issue, not pollution.

"Mussels are very sensitive to salinity," Malvas said.

Culprits in fish kill

MEANWHILE, the culprits in the fish kill in Las Piñas and Parañaque based on laboratory tests on water samples, were the levels of ammonia and phosphates, as well as low levels of dissolved oxygen.

This means, Malvas said that the water pollution, which could have been triggered by natural occurrence, worsened in these areas.

He said while the water pollution could have been caused by chemicals used in farms like fertilizers, on top of agricultural runoffs, excessive industrial waste discharge and domestic wastes, which include untreated wastewater that causes fecal coliform to spike, were also prime suspects.

However, he said the decomposing organic matters in the waters, including decaying dead plants and animals, and the excess feeds used in aquaculture farms could have aggravated the problem.

Nevertheless, he ruled out the possibility that this could have been caused by the dumping of dead swines in rivers in areas currently affected by the African swine fever.

"It is not possible because the dumping of swines in the rivers were isolated cases and could not possibly result in that level of pollution in Manila Bay," he explained.

However, because the fish kill and shellfish mortality "was not that massive," he said the DA-BFAR is not yet considering financial support or subsidy to the affected fishermen.

"What we are doing right now is continuous monitoring the water bodies in the Calabarzon, including the Laguna de Bay," he said in mixed Filipino and English.

Still unknown source, origin

WITH the source of chemicals that were believed to have caused the fish kill and shellfish mortality remaining unknown, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, for solid waste management and the local government units, nixed the possibility of chemical dumping.

However, he said a thorough investigation is being conducted.

Second opinion

SOUGHT for expert opinion, Jimely Flores, a marine and fisheries science practitioner at the Environmental Defense Fund, said the shellfish mortality could not have been caused by low salinity.

"Mussel thrives in less saline areas," she said.

According to Flores, most mussel farm areas are in bays near big mouths of rivers like Bataan Bay, Manila Bay and other inland seas with river outlets.

She said hence, it is not likely that the shellfish mortality in Bacoor and Sangley point could have been caused by low salinity.

"Salinity in Manila Bay fluctuates a lot and never kill a massive amount of fish and *tahong*. No, it can't be the reason," she said.

"What kills marine organisms is low BOD [biological oxygen demand] but never high BOD," she said.

For the fish kill, she said the low level of BOD could be one of the reasons but not in the case of mussels.

"Mussels are super resilient," she said.

But ammonia being the cause of the fish kill may be inconclusive.

"It is important to know how they conducted the test because sampling time is critical. Also, phosphates are not observed to kill marine organisms. Manila Bay is expected to be super high in those [chemicals] already given its polluted state," she said.

While low BOD could be the possible reason for the fish kill and shellfish mortality, it is interesting to know what is the cause of the low BOD in the waters, she said.

"They [investigators] need to look deeper than mere BOD. Ammonia and phosphates are not conclusive," she said.

Natural causes of low BOD includes local warming anomaly, plankton bloom, chemical and nutrient pollution, which could also be man-made when dumping happens, she said.

Observing the result of the laboratory test released by the DA-BFAR, she said the 19 ppt to 25 ppt salinity could not kill fish and marine organisms.

"That is still normal," she said.

While saying that the values on ammonia and phosphates are high, she said it could cause mortality only in fishponds and aquarium where water is stagnant. In the case of Manila Bay, the water current is strong.

"The question should be why is the ammonia and phosphate levels were so high? Marine organisms could die when exposed to high ammonia long enough to reduce their resistance to diseases. It still does not explain the massive death," she said.

Impact on small fishermen

THE twin incidents were sure to affect the livelihood of small fishermen in the affected areas.

Myrna Candinato, president of the Alyansa ng mga Magdaragat sa Bacoor Bay, said small fishermen will likely suffer the consequences.

Every time there is a fish kill or shellfish mortality, consumers are sure to avoid buying fish or mussel from the affected areas.

"Naturally, it means loss of income for us," she explained.



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Demystifying fish kill, shellfish mortality in Manila Bay

Worsening water quality?

CANDINATO said the fish kill and shellfish mortality amid the on-going rehabilitation effort of the government in Manila Bay only proves the water quality has not improved, and even worsened.

She said deadly chemicals that accumulated in the waters of Manila Bay clearly caused the mortality of the fish and mussel in their farm.

"I am afraid that they will again blame coastal communities for the fish kill. As always, we are being blamed for the pollution when in fact these are chemicals dumped by industries," she said.

Pamalakaya National Chairman Fernando Hicap earlier called for a thorough investigation into the incident.

He said the fish kill and shellfish mortality only proved the Manila Bay rehabilitation effort, instead of improving, caused the water quality to worsen.

Antiporda belied this. He said the DENR is still conducting a thorough investigation and it is too early to jump to such conclusion. He insisted that water quality in Manila Bay has improved as far as reducing fecal coliform levels is concerned.

He said the DENR, which is leading the Manila Bay rehabilitation, has imposed corrective measures among commercial establishments, including hotels and restaurants, earlier found to be illegally discharging untreated wastewater.

The DENR is also requiring these establishments not connected to proper sewer line to put up their own sewage treatment plants to ensure that wastewaters are treated before being disposed to the environment.

According to Antiporda, the campaign to rehabilitate Manila Bay, including rivers that directly flow out to its waters, will be a continuing process.

In the meantime, small fishermen affected by the fish kill and shellfish mortality may have to endure a little longer. And they are asking: What help can they get from the government?



TAHONG (mussel) farmer PAMALAKAYA



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

1914-1915

The Manila Times



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Nationinbriefs

TRASH SCREENS ALONG BALILI RIVER EYED

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet: The municipal council approved a resolution requesting the officialdom of Baguio City to fund the installation of a trash screen along strategic portions of the Balili River to prevent the huge volume of waste from the different *barangay* (villages) from being washed down. Vice Mayor Roderick Awingan said, "The installation of a series of trash screens will definitely be a big boost to the overall efforts of concerned local governments, agencies and sectors to save Balili River from becoming a dead river because of the unabated dumping of waste by people living along the river and its tributaries in Baguio City and La Trinidad," Awingan stressed. Aside from the solid waste that were being dumped along the river system, it was also discovered there were residents that directly discharge their human waste to the river. This is compounded by the animal wastes being discharged in the river.

DEXTER A. SEE



STUMPED IN THE ETERNAL CITY



NEW LIFE Andrea Gandini carves a wolf's face from a tree stump in Rome's Villa Pamphili park on Friday. —REUTERS

SCULPTOR TRANSFORMS ROME'S DEAD TREES INTO WORKS OF ART

ROME—Andrea Gandini, a 22-year-old Roman sculptor, is making a growing name for himself by turning the Eternal City's dead tree stumps into much-admired pieces of art.

Gandini, who began his tree carvings around five years ago, chipped away at his 66th stump in the huge Villa Pamphili park on Friday.

He has plenty of raw material to work with. Rome is known

as one of the greenest cities in Europe, with its 313,000 trees filling its many parks and lining the streets in the city center.

However, many were planted nearly a century ago and are now weak or dying. Seeing how they were neglected made Gandini want to act.

"I chose to carve a stump that was out on the street. That is how I chose to start carving stumps," he said. —REUTERS



Cagdianao Mining, Surigao Rotary connect with 1 million trees

It's becoming a challenge to find open areas in a highly urbanized metropolis like Surigao City where one can plant trees. But the Rotarians in the City led by the Rotary Club of Metro Surigao Foundation Inc. committed to plant one million trees and their initial experience had them wanting for more.

Together with family members and friends - with the theme "Rotary Connects the World" - Rotarians from Surigao City travelled recently to the adjacent Dinagat Islands to a tree-planting adventure in a mined-out area at Cagdianao Mining Corp. (CMC).

"In one day alone, all 139 of us, including our children, relatives and friends, planted 2,200 trees under an hour. We

felt we could do more. We felt we connected with the world indeed. It was very motivating," relayed Rotary Club of Surigao City president Louie Chua.

CMC is spearheading this 'tree-planting adventure' to showcase the mining company's Environment Protection Enhancement Program (EPEP) and to help build a community of tree-planters by enjoining equally enthusiastic environmentalists such as the members of the Rotary Club to come to the mine site to plant trees.

CMC resident mine manager Engr. Arnilo Milaor said Nickel Asia Corp (NAC) and all its subsidiaries which includes CMC, is mandated to initiate these kinds of collaborative efforts with other

organizations and government agencies.

"This is in relation with the National Greening Program of the government. We are opening the doors to Cagdianao Mining for everyone to experience the operations of a responsible mining company and to be educated on the benefits of regularly planting trees," Milaor said.

He added that CMC has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Rotary Club of Metro Surigao and has committed to provide Rotarians what they need especially healthy planting materials and access to areas waiting to be planted with all sorts of trees.

CMC also provided the group with a thorough orientation on the mining company's rehabilitation programs.



Tiniyak ng DENR

ILLEGAL MINING WAWAKASAN

Mula sa pahina 16

"There is no room for illegal mining in the Philippines," wika ni Atty. Wilfredo G. Moncano, director ng DENR Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), sa isang panayam.

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 ilang bagong polisiya para rito, katuwang ang kapulisan at iba pang law enforcement agencies.

Sa ilalim ng kasaluku-

yang administrasyon, inilunsad ng MGB ang National Task Force Mining Challenge (NTFMC) noong January 16, 2018 upang itigil ang ilegal na pagmimina sa bansa.

"Through NTFMC, we aggressively apprehend illegal mining operators, as well as seize, confiscate, and dismantle their equipment, including blasting tunnel entrances or portals to the mining sites," ani Moncano.

Ngayon, aniya, ang NTFMC ay nagsisilbi na bilang Environmental Enforcement Task Force. Bukod sa ilegal na pagmimina, binabantayan na rin nito ang paglabag sa mga batas na may kaugnayan

sa pagtotroso, agrikultura, wildlife protection, at iba pa.

"We are now pushing for the task force to be made into a separate bureau. In this way, it will have more resources, more manpower, and more leverage to work with other law enforcement bodies. The environmental laws are there, but we need to be as strict as possible with the enforcement and that means a lot of collaboration from the bottom going up," sabi ni Moncano.

Bukod sa pagpapalakas sa pagpapatupad ng batas, layunin din ng MGB ang ibaba ang bilang ng mga ilegal na mining operators sa pamamagitan ng

mga Minahang Bayan.

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

"We are now seeking to formalize the informal," ani Engr. Teodorico Sandoval, officer-in-charge ng MGB Mining Technology Division. "We're pushing for them to join the Minahang Bayan."

"The process is also faster for them," dagdag ni Sandoval. "This is to make sure that this is the best opportunity for them to become legitimate."

PMRT



Loren explores partnership between PH, German University

IN addition to the signing of an academic agreement with Ruhr University Bochum (RUB) and a lecture on Piña-Seda, Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda discussed last October 15 with the faculty of the German university on possible areas of cooperation.

"These interactions will result in enhanced partnership between the Philippines and the University most especially in cultural and heritage preservation, biodiversity conservation, climate change and sustainable development, among many others," Legarda said.

During the discussion, the RUB professors introduced to Legarda their specialties and study focus. Among the main interests discussed were on biodiversity conservation, emerging issues on migration, Spanish colonialism, and multilingualism.

On the topic of Spanish migration from Europe to Philippines to Spain, life of Rizal, and Spanish colonialism, Legarda suggested that the University partner with the Philippine Embassy in Lisbon to conduct substan-

tial research focused on those topics.

"Topics on Spanish colonialism and migration are very timely given that in 2021 we will mark the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Magellan, which resulted in the introduction of Christianity to the Philippines. During my stint as the Senate Chairman of the Committee on Finance, I provided funds to the Philippine Embassy in Lisbon for the conduct of research and lectures. You can coordinate with them to have access and make your researches possible," Legarda advised the professors.

"The Philippines has more than one hundred languages and it is interesting to really find out what happens to the local language in the process migration. I will link up the University with the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino, headed by National Artist and Chair Virgilio Almario, which documents the history of Filipino languages," Legarda said.

"Aside from the effects of migration, it will also be great to see similarities and dissimilarities between the

Philippines and German language. We also welcome further collaboration, through skills trainings and other capacity enhancement activities, to document all endangered languages of our ethno-linguistic groups in the country," Legarda added.

Dr. Eberhard Curio mentioned about the successful cooperation between the RUB scientists and the Philippines, which can be traced back to 1997 when Dr. Curio set up a research station in North West Panay Peninsula and founded the Philippine Initiative for Conservation (PhilinCon) in Pandan, Antique.

"I first met Dr. Curio 20

years ago when I was new in the Philippine Senate. At that time, the North West Panay Peninsula was not yet a protected area but I considered it so important that just last year, it became part of the 94 protected areas in the Philippines, known as the E-NIPAS Law," Legarda recalled.

As the former Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, Legarda provided support to the PhilinCon through a partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). As part of PhilinCon's output, a book containing the report of PhilinCon's initiative will be published next year.



BREAKTHROUGH

ELFREN S. CRUZ



Need for climate activism

The ecological crisis has begun. It has become a major topic in the worlds of science, the academe and even media. However, people and governments are still behaving as if there is no crisis; or, the climate crisis is a future event.

Instead of a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the global emission rate is still increasing. Sea levels are continuing to increase; but, it is noticeable that reclamation of land, building of new airports and urban development are all being done with the assumption that sea levels will relatively remain constant.

Yuval Noah Harari, in his recent book *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* wrote:

"For thousands of years *Homo Sapiens* behaved as an ecological serial killer; now it is morphing into an ecological mass murderer. If we continue with our present course, it will not just cause the annihilation of a large percentage of all life forms but also might sap the foundations of human civilization.

Most threatening of all is the prospect of climate change. Humans have been around for hundreds of thousands of years and have survived numerous ice ages and warm spells. However, agriculture, cities and complex societies have existed for no more than ten thousand years. During this period known as the Holocene, Earth's climate has been relatively stable. Any deviation from Holocene standards will present human societies with enormous challenges they have never encountered before. It will be like conducting an open indeed experiment on billions of human guinea pigs. Even if human civilization eventually adapts to the new conditions, who knows how many victims might perish in the process of adaptation."

The climate crisis is already a present reality. Scientists concede that the emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide are causing the earth's climate to change at a frightening rate. The scientific consensus is that unless the emission of greenhouse gas emissions is cut in the next two decades, average global temperature will increase resulting in expanding deserts, disappearing ice caps, rising oceans and more frequent weather events such as hurricanes and typhoons.

What will be the immediate effect of all these changes? Agricultural production will be disrupted, coastal cities will be permanently flooded, much of the civilized world will become uninhabitable and hundreds of millions of people will become refugees in search of new homes. The long term consequences

have not yet been fully studied. But, it could mean the end of human civilization as we know it as a result of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse - War, Famine, Disease. Pestilence.

Scientists have warned us of an even worst consequence. There are "tipping points" beyond which even a dramatic drop in greenhouse gas emissions will not be enough to reverse the trend and avoid a worldwide tragedy. As global warming melts the polar ice sheets, less sunlight is reflected back from Earth to outer space. This planet will then absorb more heat, temperatures will rise even higher, and the ice will melt even faster. The worst thing is that, at a certain point, scientists believe that it will gather an unstoppable momentum and all the ice in the polar regions will melt even if humans stop burning coal, oil, and gas.

Unfortunately instead of doing something about it, in recognition of the danger the world is facing, the global emission rate is still increasing.

Climate activists

The number of persons engaged in warning the world and demanding action regarding the climate crisis have resulted in a growing global climate movement. Today, the most famous is the 16 year old Greta Thunberg who sparked a global climate movement through personal action.

There were two other persons who warned of this climate crisis and begun the climate movement. Rachel Louise Carson was the author of the book *Silent Spring*. Then she wrote a trilogy of books about ocean life - *The Sea Around Us*, *The Edge of the Sea*, *Under the Sea Wind*. Henry David Thoreau was an American essayist, poet and philosopher who is best known for his book *Walden*, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings.

Today, the global environmental movement has emerged to become a diverse group of social, scientific and even political movements. The Green Party has achieved major political status in several countries of Western Europe. The conservation movement has gained strength especially in developing countries. Its core principles are that human activity damaged the environment, there is a civic duty to maintain the environment for future generations and scientifically, empirically based methods should be applied to ensure this duty was carried out.

The Extinction Rebellion is beginning to be one of the most publicized climate activist movements. It is a non violent global environmental movement which aims to use civil disobedience to compel government action to take specific actions to avoid social and ecological collapse.

Pope Francis is in many ways a climate activist. He wrote the papal encyclical *Laudato Si* which was a worldwide wake up call to help humanity understand the destruction that man is rendering to the environment and his fellow men. This year he declared a global climate emergency, warning of the dangers of global heating and that a failure to act urgently to reduce greenhouse gases would be a "Brutal Act of Injustice Toward the Poor and Future Generations."

It is time for our political leaders to focus on this climate crisis instead of fighting for bigger pork barrel allocations. It is also time for business leaders to show leadership on climate change as part of their responsibility and not just acts of charity. Each and every person should become a climate activist.



Why not carry out long-planned ferry system?

IT is now generally accepted that the traffic problem in Metro Manila is bound to get worse before it gets better. It is now near the end of October and right after November 1, the holiday spirit begins to pick up with lanterns appearing in city streets and in homes, malls begin announcing sales, and traffic builds up as people join in more activities in schools, offices, and neighborhoods.

Two-hour trips in the morning and evening rush hours have become the new normal. Long before presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo advised commuters to wake up early to get to their offices in time, they had been doing just that. It seems they do not expect any real improvement in traffic anytime soon.

There was an effort by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to ban provincial buses but then the passengers still needed to take other vehicles to take them to their various destinations in the city. New roads are being built and new routes are being drawn up. But these are not likely to be ready before the year ends.

Sen. Juan Edgardo Angara said there is one project that can be carried out quickly, which might help ease the Metro traffic situation. While we are all waiting for the completion of the elevated highways, the expansion of the capacities of the light rail systems, and the expansion of the SLEX Skyway, he said, why not carry out the long-postponed expanded Pasig River Ferry system?

There was a river ferry service as early as the 1960s, but low passenger turnout, due partly to river pollution problems, forced the early operators to shut down. The present ferry service is said to have

changed its trip schedules several times, which could explain why it has not drawn more customers.

Last April 3, 2018, a committee led by then Secretary Benjamin Diokno of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) drew up a plan for a Pasig River Convergence Program that would revive the the ferry system as an alternative form of transportation in Metro Manila. It would acquire a new fleet of 24 air-conditioned riverboats to travel up and down the Pasig River from Manila Bay to Laguna de Bay, with 12 stations to be expanded to 29 in four years.

A cabinet meeting convened by President Duterte approved the plan. Operational guidelines would be drawn up by a committee that included officials of the DBM, the MMDA, the Department of Transportation, the National Economic and Development Authority, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, and the Laguna Lake Development Authority.

That was on April 3, 2018, 18 months ago. But nothing more was heard about it after that initial report of its approval in the cabinet meeting.

While the public is waiting for the big projects to be completed, Senator Angara said last Sunday, the government should consider carrying out the Pasig river ferry project. It is easier and faster to implement, he said, as there is already a feasibility plan for the acquisition of new boats and refurbishing of existing stations.

If the ferry system can be made to operate reliably and consistently, it will improve ridership, which was the problem faced by the previous ferry operators, he said. Passengers only need to know that the ferry will arrive on time and they will get to their destinations on schedule, he said.



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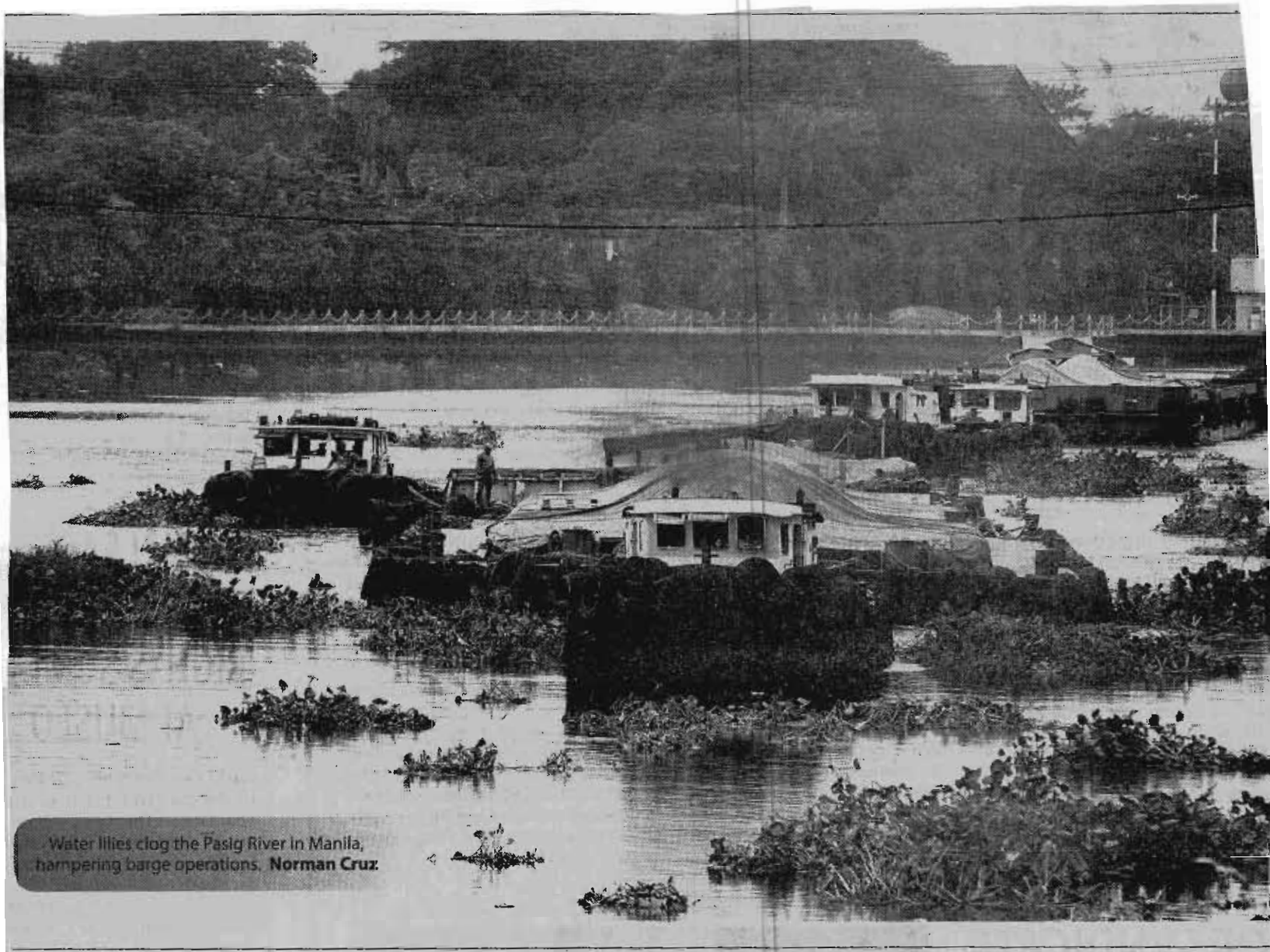
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Water lilies clog the Pasig River in Manila, hampering barge operations. **Norman Cruz**



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Environment officer shot dead in Albuera

By **MARIE TONETTE MARTICIO**

TACLOBAN - A local official was shot dead by still unidentified motorcycle-riding suspects in broad daylight Friday (Oct 18) at Barte St., Brgy. Poblacion, Albuera, Leyte.

Police Capt. John Rey Layog, Albuera Police Chief identified the victim as Teofilo Granada, 51, who was the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer and concurrent Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer of the town.

Layog said that two suspects riding a motorcycle were noticed by witnesses to be in the area that early morning.

He said that one of the suspects approached the victim on the driver's side and peppered him with bullets as he was inside his pickup.



PNP, NALUSUTAN NA NAMAN Sinisiyat ng mga awtoridad ang bangkay ni Municipal Environment and Natural Resources officer Teofilo Granada, 51, matapos ambusin ng riding in-tandem sa harap ng bahay nito sa Albuera, Leyte, nitong Biyernes.

Albuera official, todas sa ambush

NI MARIE TONETTE MARTICIO

TACLOBAN CITY - Napatay ang isang opisyal ng Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) nang pagbabarilin ito ng riding in-tandem sa Barte St., Barangay Poblacion, Albuera, Leyte, nitong Biyernes.

Ang biktima ay kinilala ni Albuera Police commander Capt. John Rey Layog, na si Teofilo Granada, 51, may-asawa, na opisyal din ng Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office ng nabanggit na bayan.

Dead on the spot si Granada dahil sa mga tama ng bala sa iba't ibang bahagi ng katawan, ayon sa pulisya.

Bago ang insidente, napansin na ang dalawang suspek na nakasakay ng motorsiklo sa naturang lugar.

Kalalabas lamang ng biktima sa kanilang gate sakay ng puting Toyota Hilux nang lapitan ito ng isa sa dalawang suspek at pinagbabaril.

Paliwanag ng imbestigador, nagawa pang bumaba ng sasakyan ang biktima at tinangkang tumakas.

Gayunman, niratrat pa ito ng isa pang suspek na naghihintay ilang metro ang layo sa kanyang bahay.

Kaagad na tumakas ang mga suspek matapos ang krimen.

Nasamsam sa lugar ang limang basyo ng bala ng ca. 45 pistol.

Nag-iwan din ang mga suspek ng mensahe na nakasulat sa isang karton na nagbabala sa mga opisyal ng pamahalaan itigil na ang nagpapahintulot sa quarrying, sand and gravel operations at iligal na pagpuputol ng mga puno.



3 kotongerong empleyado ng Pasay nasa hot water

NASA hot water at malamang na masibak sa trabaho ang tatlong empleyado ng Pasay City Environmental and Natural Resources (PCENRO), matapos na isyuhan ni Pasay City Mayor Emi Calixto-Rubiano ng show cause order upang magpaliwanag sa naging viral video sa social media na umano'y nangotong ng isang Koreano na naaktuhang naninigarilyo sa bahagi ng San Juan De Dios Hospital kamakailan.

Kinilala ang tatlong empleyado na sina Michael De la Cruz, 48; Roel Dimaculangan, 46; at Noel Surigao, nasa hustong gulang at pawang empleyado ng PCENRO sa nasabing lungsod.

Ayon kay Calixto-Rubiano, pagpapaliwanagin niya ang tatlong kawani hinggil sa kumalat na viral video sa social media kung saan nakita ang ginawang pagsita ng mga ito sa isang Koreano dahil sa paglabag sa ordinansa ukol sa pagbabawal ng paninigarilyo sa pampublikong lugar. Kabilang sa nakunan umano ng video ang pag-abot ng P500 sa tatlong empleyado.

Posibleng maharap sa kasong paglabag sa Grave Misconduct at kapag napatunayan na may paglabag tuluyan nang kanselasyon ng kanilang job order agreement.

(Gaynor Bonilla)



CHINESE NANGUNANG TURISTA SA BORACAY

AKLAN - ANG mga Chinese pa rin ang nanatiling pinakamaraming turista sa Boracay simula Enero hanggang Marso ngayong taon.

Sa record ng Municipal Tourism Office ng LGU-Malay, nasa 363,832 ang kabuuang bilang ng mga turistang Chinese na bumisita sa

isla mula Enero hanggang Setyembre o 44% ng 820,622 ng mga dayuhang bakasyunista.

Sinundan ito ng mga Korean na lumipad mula sa Incheon na umabot ng 303,504 o 37% ng foreign arrivals, at pumangatlo ang Taiwan na nakatala ng 25,133.

Lalo pang tumaas ang bilang ng mga

dayuhan mula sa nasa-bing mga bansa na bumisita sa isla o 43% ng 1,601,450 arrivals sa nabanggit na period dahil sa dagdag na regional flights, maayos na impraestruktura at tourism appeal ng Boracay.

Inaasahan naman ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Malay na madadagdagan pa ang bilang ng

mga lokal at foreign tourist na bibisita sa popular tourist destination sa buong mundo matapos itong kilalaning best island in Asia ng Conde Nast Traveller readers.

Samantala, ang local tourists ay nakapagtala ng 729,415 arrivals sa parehong panahon.

PMRT



AirAsia PH increases Clark-Boracay flights

LOW-cost carrier AirAsia Philippines has increased flights to Boracay from its Clark air hub to take advantage of the booming tourism on the island.

In a statement on Friday, the company said it restored its Clark-Kalibo route and boosted flights between Clark and Caticlan, which are gateways to Boracay.

The thrice-weekly flights from Clark to Kalibo, and an additional flight from Clark to Caticlan, started on Thursday, it added.

"Our additional services are in response to the increased demand for flights to Boracay, especially this holiday season," AirAsia Philippines Chief Executive Officer Ricardo Isla said in the statement.

"Guests can fly from Clark, the less effort airport to either Kalibo or Caticlan, giving them more flexibility and options. Boracay is a top holiday destination and we are proud to contribute to the region's reemerging tourism since its closure last year," he added.

AirAsia also offers domestic flights from Clark to Cebu, Davao, Puerto Princesa, Tacloban, Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro.

The local unit of Malaysia's AirAsia Group Berhad has a fleet of 24 aircraft, conducting over 500 weekly domestic and international flights from Manila, Clark, Cebu and Kalibo.

LISBET K. ESMAEL