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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Tribe leader won't give consent to Kaliwa Dam

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
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LUCENA CITY—A leader of the Agta-Dumagat tribe in northern Quezon said most Dumagats could never agree to the controversial Kaliwa Dam, scotching hopes that the government project would ever get the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) required by law.

Dumagat leader Marcelino Tena of the Samahan ng mga Katutubong Agta/Dumagat-Remontado na Binabaka at Ipinagtatangol ang Lupaing Ninuno accused government agencies of conspiring against the Dumagat people so the dam could be given an environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

"[But] even with their anomalous ECC, the (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System or MWSS) still won't get our FPIC. They will never have it," Tena said in Filipino in a

phone interview on Friday.

The MWSS has yet to secure the required FPIC for the P18.72-billion dam project which the government said would be funded through loans from China.

'Invented' consultations

Tena assailed the MWSS and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for "inventing" consultation reports where tribesmen supposedly manifested their approval of the project.

"They should come down here to know the truth. There were no honest consultations. The reports were all invented," Tena said.

He also denounced the NCIP for again failing its mandate to protect indigenous peoples under Republic Act No. 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, which also required the FPIC.

"The NCIP is now an acces-

sory of the MWSS," he said, claiming that the NCIP reported that Sierra Madre tribesmen unanimously supported the dam project in six cluster meetings conducted by the NCIP.

"But of the six clusters, only one said 'yes' to the project. The other five strongly declared 'no,'" Tena said.

Tena also assailed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) for its misinterpretation of the faked consultation reports, which were the basis of the ECC.

He said the tribe leaders would conduct a series of urgent consultations with different tribal communities in the first week of November.

"Definitely, we will solidify our ranks to strengthen our resolve in our continuous opposition to the dam project. There will be more militant protests

and marches to come," Tena said.

In 2009, Sierra Madre tribesmen, farmers, and religious and environmentalist groups walked 148 kilometers from General Nakar, Quezon, to Manila in a nine-day protest march that dramatized their opposition to the controversial project.

Dam to address water crisis

The MWSS has long been pushing for the construction of the dam to address a projected water crisis in Metro Manila.

Last week, the DENR-EMB issued an ECC for the project amid fierce opposition from environmental groups and indigenous communities that decried its risks and irregularities.

The project would submerge parts of the Sierra Madre in Tanay town, Rizal; and General Nakar and Infanta towns in Quezon. INQ



Editorial

Linisin muna ang Ilog Pasig para okey ang ferry

GRABE na ang nararanasang trapik sa Metro Manila at maaari pang lumubha ngayong papalapit na ang kapaskuhan. Kaya maraming nalisip na paraan kung paano masosolb ang trapik. Isa sa pinagtutuunan ngayon ng pansin ay ang Pasig River ferry system. Maganda umanong alternatibo ang ferry at malaki ang maitutulong sa panahon ngayon na pinuproblema nang mamamayan kung paano makararating sa kanilang trabaho o eskuwelahan dahil sa trapik. Ayon sa pag-aaral, bilyong piso ang nasasayang bawat araw dahil sa trapik. Sa EDSA, gumugugol ng dalawa hanggang tatlong oras ang mga motorista dahil sa trapik.

Sabi ni Sen. Sonny Angara, malaki ang maitutulong ng ferry sa ngayon lalo't hindi pa operational ang Skyway, LRT 2 at ang Philippine National Railways. Sa kasalukuyan, nasa construction stage pa ang Skyway na magli-link sa NLEX at SLEX. Nagka-problema naman ang Light Rail Transit 2 at nasa rehabilitation stage naman ang PNR. Ayon kay Angara, dapat itong tuunan ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Maganda ang proposal na pasiglahin ang operasyon ng Pasig Ferry. Sa kasalukuyan, may 14 na stations ang Pasig Ferry pero 11 lamang ang operational. Napagsisilbihan nito ang commuters mula Maynila, Mandaluyong, Makati at Pasig.

Tama si Angara na malaki ang maitutulong ng Pasig Ferry sa problema sa trapiko. Pero paano mahihikayat ang mga tao na sumakay sa ferry kung ang nakakasulasok na amoy ng ilog ay hindi kakayanin. Sa totoo lang, masarap sanang magbiyahe sa ferry pero ang hindi matatagalan ay ang makabaliktad-sikmurang amoy ng tubig. Isa pang problemang kinakaharap ng mga pasahero ay ang mga ginagawa ng mga nakatira sa pampang ng Pasig River na hinahagisan ng dumi ng tao ang dumaraang ferry.

Mas maganda kung pagtutuunan muna sanang linisin ang ilog para maging kaaya-aya at mahikayat ang mga tao na sumakay dito. Protektahan din sila sa mga salaulang nakatira sa pampang.

Noong nakaraang buwan, inatasan ni President Duterte si DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu na linisin ang Pasig River. Sana maisakatuparan ito para maging matagumpay ang pagyaot ng ferry at makatulong sa traffic problem sa MM.



Environment at social safeguards pinatitiyak ng DENR sa Kaliwa Dam project

PINAALALAHANAN ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) na tiyakin ang pagsunod sa environmental at social safeguards sa implementasyon ng Kaliwa Dam project na kamakailan ay nabigyan ng Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) ng DENR.

Ayon kay Cimatu, mahigpit ang gagawing pagbabantay ng DENR sa pamamagitan ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) sa pagpapatupad ng MWSS sa mga kondisyon na nakasaad sa ECC.

"We expect the MWSS, as project proponent, to ensure that all activities related to the project are environmentally and socially sound and sustainable. Any serious violation or non-compliance with the conditions will result in the cancellation of the ECC," pagbabanta ni Cimatu.

Kabilang sa mga nakasaad sa ibinigay na ECC sa MWSS ang konstruksiyon at operasyon ng gravity dam sa kahabaan ng Kaliwa River na matatagpuan sa mga bayan ng Teresa at Tanay sa probinsiya ng Rizal, at General Nakar at Infanta naman sa Quezon.

Ang dam ay may taas na 60-meters at mayroong riverbed elevation na 100 meters. Ang reservoir surface area ay aabot sa 291 hectares at may full supply level volume ng 57 million cubic meters. Ang Kaliwa Dam ay magsisilbing karagdagang pagkukunan ng tubig at siyang magdadagdag ng supply ng tubig sa Angat Dam na siyang pinagkukunan ng 96 percent ng water requirement ng Metro Manila. Nakakuha ng ECC ang Kaliwa Dam project mula sa EMB matapos itong pumasa sa requirement ng Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System sa ilalim ng Presidential Decree 1586 at ang implementing rules and regulations nito.

Sa pagbibigay ng ECC, sinabi ni Cimatu na inaasahan sa MWSS sa pagpapatupad ng mga hakbang na nakasaad sa ECC na may layon na protektahan at mapigilan ang maaaring maging epekto ng Kaliwa Dam project sa komunidad, kalusugan, kapakanan at kaikasan.

JAY REYES



Kaliwa dam aprub sa DENR

Inaprubahan na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang P18.7-bilyong Kaliwa dam project sa Quezon province matapos na isyuhan ng 'environmental compliance certificate' (ECC) sa kabilang ng pagharang dito mula sa 'environmental group' at katutubo dahil sa anila'y bukod sa iregularidad ay mapanganib ito sa kanilang komunidad.

Ang Kaliwa dam ay isa sa itinuturing na prayoridad na proyekto ng administrasyong Duterte na pinondohan ng Chinese loans, na sinasabing solusyon sa nararanasang krisis sa tubig sa Metro Manila at kalapit na mga lalawigan.

Bukod sa priority project ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, kailangan ang dam para mapunan ang pangailangan ng tubig sa Metro Manila, ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

"Yan po ang pinakamalaking factor, 'yang water crisis natin. And yet, kung titingnan natin sa iilan pong nagre-reklamo, ilan naman po ang makikinabang

sakaling matuloy ito," paliwanag ni Antiporda.

Aniya, malinaw naman sa probisyon ng ECC na kailangan muna nang kuhanin ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) ang permiso ng mga katutubo at pamahalaang lokal, gaya ng tinatakda ng batas.

"It doesn't mean na tuloy-tuloy na kaagad 'yong project nila dahil may probisyon dito na nakalagay 'yong however you may proceed with the project implementation only after securing necessary permits from other pertinent government agencies," ani Antiporda.

Nabatid na inilabas ang ECC makaraang i-anunsiyo ng dalawang pribadong water concessionaires sa Metro Manila at mga bayan at siyudad sa Rizal at Cavite, ang pagkakaroon ng 'service interruptions' dahil sa patuloy na pagbaba ng water level ng Angat Dam sa Bulacan.

Magugunitang nitong October 11 sa pamamagitan ng isang sulat sa MWSS administrator, ay inisyu-

han ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ng DENR ng ECC application ang bagong Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project.

Ito ay dahil nakapasa umano ito sa mga 'requirements' ng Presidential Decree No. 1586, o the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System, at rekomendasyon ng Environmental Impact Assessment Review Committee.

"With the issuance of this ECC, you are expected to implement the measures presented in the EIS intended to protect and mitigate the project's adverse impacts on community health, welfare and the environment," base sa liham na nilagdaan ni EMB Director Metodio Turbella.

Ang ECC ay isa sa mga kinakailangan upang agad na maisakatuparan ang konstruksiyon ng 'gravity dam' sa Kaliwa River, na nagko-cover ng 'reservoir surface area' na 291 hectares, at 'gross reservoir volume' na 57 million cubic meters para sa 'full supply level.' (Dolly Cabreza)



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Boracay rehab kinilala ng Japan Tourism

Tumanggap si Department of Tourism Secretary (DOT) Bernadette Romulo-Puyat ng award for Excellent Partner sa Japan Tourism Awards sa Osaka noong Huwebes.

Ito ay matapos ang pagsusumikap ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas sa isinagawang rehabilitasyon sa Isla ng Boracay.

Humanga ang award-giving body sa 'socially advanced initiatives' ng DOT kaugnay sa implementasyon ng rehabilitasyon sa isla.

Personal na tinanggap ni Romulo-Puyat ang Excellent Partner Award sa opening ceremonies ng Tourism Expo Japan na ginanap sa Hyatt Regency Hotel sa Osaka.

"We share this award with the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) and DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government). Our combined efforts in the rehabilitation of Boracay is still a work in progress, but already we are seeing the rewards," ayon sa kalihim.

Kamakailan, ang Boracay ay kinilala bilang Asia's Top Reader's Choice Award ng Conde Nast Traveler.

Kinilala ng award-giving body ang pagsusumikap ng tourism organizations sa buong mundo na naka-



pag-ambag ng mga pagbabago at pagpapalawak sa industriya ng turismo.

Ang naturang event ay dinaluhan ng mga ministers of tourism sa buong mundo, executives mula sa international tourism organizations at governors ng Japan. **(Juliet de Loza-Cudia)**



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'Cesspool' problem hounds Boracay

SPECIAL REPORT

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
@nestorburgosINQ

(First of three parts)

BORACAY ISLAND, AKLAN—Is the much-touted rehabilitation of world-renowned Boracay as successful as claimed?

Early last year, President Duterte said the resort island had become a "cesspool" and ordered its shutdown to prevent its further deterioration. Boracay was thus closed to tourists for six months in 2018—from April 26 to Oct. 25.

In his State of the Nation Address last July, the President declared: "We cleaned and rehabilitated the island, and I allowed it to heal naturally. I am proud to say that it has been restored close to its original pristine state."

But last September, an underwater video of a pipe discharging dark-colored wastewater into the sea went viral. It raised apprehension that the main environmental concern in Boracay—ensuring that water quality is within acceptable standards—has not been fully and strategically addressed.

It also refueled criticism that the hastily implemented six-month closure of the island, which resulted in the loss of jobs for thousands of workers and crippled, if not closed down, many businesses, was unnecessary because rehabilitation activities could have gone on for years.

Legal complaints

In fact, a significant number of workers who were laid off or were told to temporarily stop working during the six-month shutdown have not returned to work even if most business establishments resumed operations when the island was reopened to tourists a year ago.

One hotel official said about 40 percent of their workers found jobs elsewhere during the shutdown.

For alleged negligence in the management of Boracay Island, complaints were filed against 17 officials, including Aklan Gov. Florencio Miraflores and Mayor Ciceron Cawaling and all municipal councilors of Malay.

In April 2018, the Office of the Ombudsman dismissed the complaint against all of the officials, except for two: Cawaling and municipal licensing officer Jen Salsona. They were found guilty of grave misconduct, gross neglect of duty, conduct unbecoming of a public official and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

Cawaling won as mayor in this year's elections but was prevented by the Department of the Interior and Local Government from assuming office pending the resolution of his appeal on his dismissal.

In November last year, the National Bureau of Investigation filed graft and malversation complaints at the Office of the Ombudsman against former and incumbent officials of Malay for



STILL UPGRADING Nearly a year after the reopening of Boracay, the coverage of the centralized sewer system remains at its preclosure area of 61 percent of the 1,032-hectare island. Boracay Island Water Co., a water service provider controlled by the Ayala subsidiary Manila Water, says its focus had been on the upgrading of sewer pipes along the island's main road and the putting up of individual sewage treatment plants. —PHOTO COURTESY OF BORACAY REHABILITATION CONTINUES



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Cesspool problem hounds Boracay



Officials are still awaiting the report of the Commission on Audit on the use of the environmental fees collected from tourists visiting Boracay

the alleged misuse of millions of pesos in environmental fees collected from tourists.

But one respondent claimed to have yet to receive a subpoena or order from the Ombudsman in connection with the NBI complaints almost a year after these were filed.

Interior Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III said he and other officials were also still awaiting the report of the Commission on Audit on the use of the environmental fees collected from tourists visiting Boracay.

The report will be the basis for the possible filing of administrative cases against the former and incumbent officials.

Sewage treatment

During the shutdown, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) required commercial establishments, especially those along the beach front, that were not connected to the centralized sewer system, to put up individual or clustered sewage treatment plants (STPs).

A modular STP costs from P2.5 million to P3 million.

The DENR subsequently entered into a controversial agreement with Boracay Tubi System Inc. (BTSI), controlled by MacroAsia Corp., to build 105 STPs on the island.

A number of business operators and residents questioned the mandatory putting up of STPs for the reason that a centralized sewage treatment system already existed. The system is operated by the water service provider, Boracay Island Water Co. (BIWC), controlled by the Ayala subsidiary Manila Water.

According to the business

operators, efforts should have been focused on ensuring that establishments were connected to the centralized sewer system. They said individual STPs would be difficult to monitor and regulate, and would increase the risk of the discharge of untreated wastewater.

Cease-and-desist order

Their fears proved true last September, when the BTSI discharge pipe was caught on video spewing dark-colored wastewater.

The pipe, stretching a kilometer from the shoreline to the sea, was supposed to discharge treated wastewater from at least 49 STPs of hotels and resorts.

The DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) issued a cease-and-desist order on BTSI after water samples taken from the mouth of the outfall failed acceptable levels of fecal coliform bacteria and phosphate.

But the order was lifted on Sept. 24, after the water quality at the outfall reached acceptable standards, according to lawyer Ramar Neil Pascua, DENR-EMB Western Visayas director.

Joint sampling

Pascua said BTSI's violation had been endorsed to the DENR's Pollution and Adjudication Board for the meting of a recommended maximum fine of P321,000 per day for eight days, or P2.56 million.

In a statement released a week after the cease-and-desist order was issued, BTSI said it had resolved the issue. It cited results of a joint sampling with the DENR conducted on Sept. 21 showing fecal coliform bacteria within tolerable levels.

It said that all wastewater was being treated on site at the STP of establishments, and that excess water passed an interceptor before being discharged into the sea.

Illegal pipes

Pipes discharging untreated wastewater on the beach and into the drainage system were among the factors cited for the poor water quality of Boracay.

But the DENR claimed that these illegal pipes were detected and plugged or removed during the island's shutdown.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu earlier claimed that the highest coliform bacteria level in the past months was 40 (most probable number/100 milliliters), way lower than the acceptable level of 100 MPN/100 ml.

BIWC also installed individual STPs for 13 establishments, according to Blanca Eunicia Aldaba, its head of business operations. It is also upgrading the sewer line on the island's main road.

Connections to the centralized sewer system operated by BIWC increased from 1,189 in December 2018 to 1,350 this year.

Centralized STPs

BTSI installed at least 67 STPs.

But nearly a year after the reopening of Boracay, the coverage of the centralized sewer system remains at its preclosure area of 61 percent of the 1,032-hectare island.

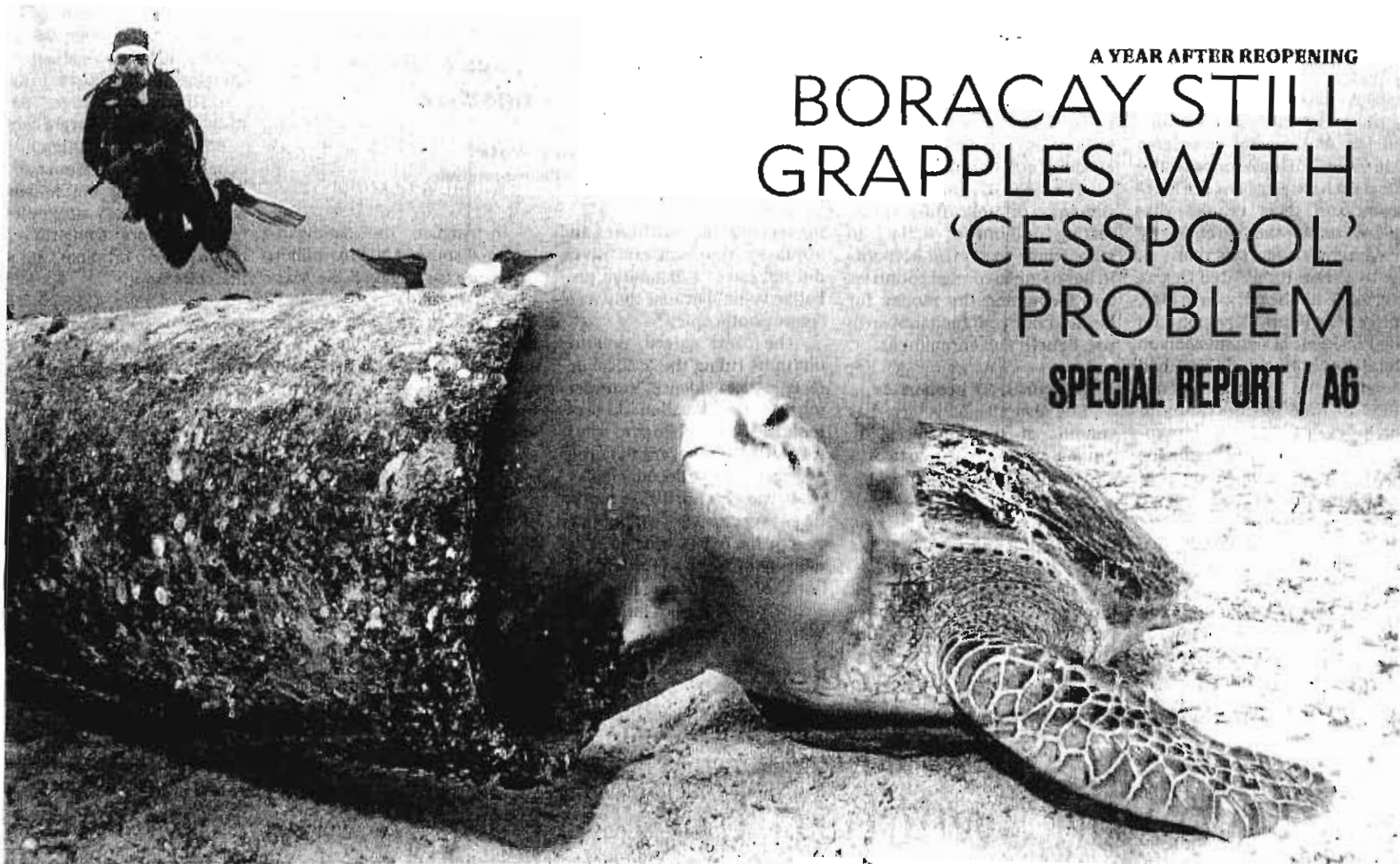
Aldaba said the focus had been on the upgrading of sewer pipes along the main road and the putting up of individual STPs.

BIWC is operating two centralized STPs, one each in Barangays Manoc-Manoc and Balabag, which have been compliant with environmental and water quality standards.

Construction of a third STP in Barangay Yapak, at the northern end of the island, will start in the third quarter of 2020 and is due for completion in the first quarter of 2023. This will make the island fully covered by the sewer system.

BIWC has begun putting up the pipes going to Yapak, with 17 percent completed as of Sept. 27. Completion is due next year, according to Aldaba. INQ

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A YEAR AFTER REOPENING
**BORACAY STILL
GRAPPLES WITH
'CESSPOOL'
PROBLEM**
SPECIAL REPORT / A6

POOR WATER QUALITY Pipes discharging untreated wastewater on the beach of Boracay and into its waters, endangering marine creatures, were among the reasons for the island's poor water quality. Environment officials claim the illegal pipes had already been detected and plugged or removed. —PHOTO COURTESY OF BORACAY WILSON



No tree cutting, Gwen insists

I would like to spare those protesters of the agony and heart attack. Surely there will be no cutting

By Rico M. Osmeña

CEBU – Governor Gwendolyn Garcia insisted there will be no cutting of centuries-old acacia trees in Barangay Perrelos in Carcar City, Cebu amid the uproar against the road widening project at the Southern provincial portion.

“There will be no cutting. I repeat, read my lips: There will be no cutting. Again, there will be no cutting,” Garcia said in the Cebuano vernacular.

Her reaction came after former Vice Governor Democrito Barcenas and his wife lawyer Lourdes Barcenas filed a Temporary Environment Protection Order and Writ of *Kalikasan* against the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the protection of the roadside trees.

“First of all in the 2020 budget of the DPWH, that is not included. There is budget for Naga road section only and the Carcar widening is not included,” she added.

The governor said that of the 32 trees covered by a tree cutting permit by the Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO) in Argao, six were located in carriageways, 15 along the sidewalk and 11 near the sidewalk or carriageways.

“I would like to spare those protesters of the agony and heart attack. Surely there

will be no cutting,” she assured.

“Please read and listen to the news and don’t react too much as its going to cost you anxiety over nothing. And that’s just going to make the quality of your life so miserable,” Garcia advised.

As this developed, the 122 trees that will be affected by the road widening project along Natalio Bacalso Avenue in Cebu City are still on its processes for approval by the city.

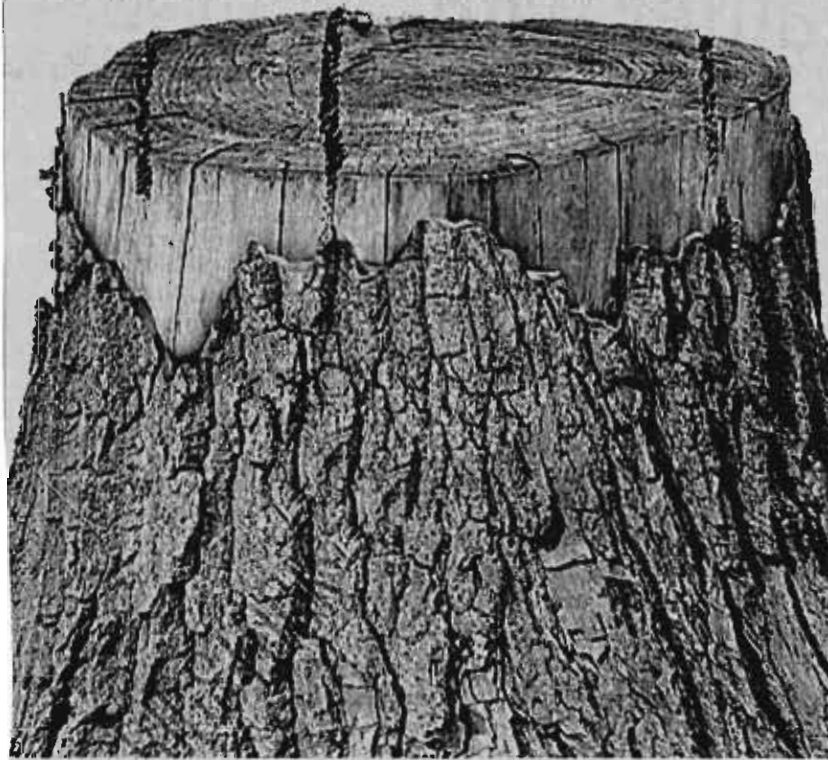
Cebu City Councilor Jerry Guardo, the chairperson of the Committee on Infrastructure and Communications told the Daily Tribune that there will be 119 trees to be earthballed and only three will be cut off.

“The proponent DPWH is currently complying with the requirements set by the City Council during the public hearing like locational clearance, construction and tapping permit, City CENRO clearance, Cebu City Traffic Operations and Management clearance, traffic impact assessment and drainage design,” he added.

Guardo is hopeful that DPWH will reconsider within its road widening project the drainage masterplan for the specific location along Bacalso Avenue.

As based on the inquiry conducted by the City Council, the planned road widening has not integrated the Cebu City drainage and sewerage masterplan with more than P8 billion budget allocation.

For the environment Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia was emphatic when she said that she will spare the trees in a road widening project.





60-40 sea deal more than fair

By Francis T. Wakefield

For National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., the 60-40 sharing deal in favor of the Philippines in the planned joint oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea with China is more than fair.

At a press conference in Malacañang yesterday, Esperon stressed that the sharing arrangement could still be increased depending on the inter-government joint



Annual exodus Bus terminals in Metro Manila have filled up since yesterday for the *Undas* observance when travel peaks.

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60-40 sea deal more than fair

It is a desirable sharing, but it is not final. It could even go up to 61 or more

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steering committee discussions in the future.

Esperon cited that Beijing would shoulder the cost of extraction and other expenses during the exploration.

"It is a desirable sharing, but it is not final. It could even go up to 61 or more," said Esperon.

"They are spending for it and we are getting more from the net share which is more than fair, right?" he added.

for exploration are "areas where there is no licensee or awardee," including Palawan.

"It will be the PNOC [Philippine National Oil Company] that will participate," he said.

Esperon said a joint steering committee with representatives from both countries has already been formed last week. They are set to meet next week for the first round of talks of the joint oil exploration.

"I do not have the names now, but the steering committee would be chaired by Foreign Affairs. The members are from the Department of Energy and as well as Department of Environment and Natural Resources," Esperon said.

"We had it formed a week ago and in fact they are getting ready for the first round of talks within October. At the same time, we will have close to the time, we will have our bilateral consultative mechanisms," he added.



18 oras na walang tubig sa 15 milyong customers
Maynilad at Manila Water dapat managot - Imee

HUMIRIT si Senador Imee Marcos na mapanagot ang mga may-ari ng Maynilad at Manila Water sa sunod-sunod na mararanasang krisis sa tubig ng halos 15-milyong consumer sa Metro Manila at karating lalawigan.

Ginawa ni Marcos ang panawagan sa abiso ng Maynilad at Manila Water companies na magpapatupad sila ng araw-araw na rotational service interruptions sa mga konsyumer simula ngayong araw (Oktubre 24).

Giit ni Marcos na dapat pinaghandaan ng dalawang water concessionaires ang nasabing krisis dahil sapol nito ang mga mahihirap na konsyumer.

"Kawawa naman ang mga mahihirap na pamilya at ang mga malilit na negosyo, gaya ng karinderya, car wash at laundry shops na gumagamit ng tubig sa araw-araw," pahayag ni Marcos.

Sinabi ni Marcos na ito na ang pangalawang pagkakataon na mararanasan ang krisis sa tubig sa Metro Manila at karating

probinsya na tumama nitong nakaraang panahon ng tag-init.

"Di ba nasabon at binalaan na sila ni Pangulong Duterte na ite-terminate ang concession agreements noong Marso dahil sa kapal-pakan nila, pero ngayon wala pa rin silang solusyon sa problema sa tubig. Alam naman nila na may kakulangan sa suplay nito. Bakit ang mga tao ang babalik ng sakripisyo?" galit na pahayag ni Marcos.

Idinagdag pa ni Marcos na maaring silipin ng Senado ang concession agreements ng dalawang water companies na binigyan ng exclusive rights ng pamahalaan na i-operate at i-maintain ang water utilities sa loob ng ilang taon.

Nakalatag sa nasabing kasunduan ang mga panuntunan para makapag-operate ang Manila Water at Maynilad at makarekober ng kanilang investment.

Apektado ng water crisis ang may 15-milyong kustomer ng Maynilad at Manila Water sa mga lungsod ng Mandaluyong,

Maynila, Marikina, Navotas, Muntinlupa, Malabon, Makati, Las Piñas, Caloocan, Valenzuela, Parañaque, Pasay, Quezon City. Kabilang din ang mga lalawigan ng Rizal, Cavite at Meycauayan Bulacan.

Sa anunsyo ng Maynilad, magpapatupad sila ng 18 oras na rotational service interruptions araw-araw simula sa Oct. 24 dahil sa patuloy na pagbaba ng water level sa Angat at Ipo dams bunga ng kawalan ng ulan.

Inihayag ng Manila Water na hindi pa rin tumataas ang kasalukuyang water allocation sa kanilang National Water Resources Board (NWRB) na 40 cubic meters per second (cms) mula sa normal na 48cms.

Sa report ng PAGASA, nasa 187.53 meters ang water level ng Angat Dam, bahagyang mataas sa 180 meters normal level.

Ang Ipo Dam naman ay nasa mababang lebel na 100.76 meters mula sa 101-meter maintaining level. (Mylene Alfonso)



Department of Water bill isasalang sa Kamara

NIREREPASO ng isang 'Technical Working Group' sa Kamara na pinamumunuan ni Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, ang panukalang batas na nalalayong likhain ang Department of Water Resources (DWR), kung saan pagsasamahin ang mga programa sa tubig ng bansa.

Ang 'National Water Act,' ay batay sa halos 30 panukalang batas para tugunan ang lalong tumitinding problema sa tubig ng maraming

Pilipino. Dalawa sa naturang mga panukala ay akda ni Salceda, na chairman ng House Ways and Means Committee.

Suportado ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang panukala na ang layon ay itatag ang 'Water Regulatory Commission' (WRC) sa ilalim ng DWR.

Ayon kay Salceda, inaasahang maipapasa ng Kamara ang consolidated National Water Act sa Enero.

"Sadyang kailangan

ng nga ng Pilipinas ang magkaroon ng mabisang Department of Water Resources, upang maigtugma ang masalimoot na sistema ng pangangasiwa sa tubig sa bansa dahil sa ngayon ay may mga 30 ahensiyang pambansa at lokal na nakikialam dito; dahil hindi 'walang kaubusan' ang ating yamang tubig lalo na patuloy na lumalaki ang ating populasyon at kailangan ito sa patuloy na papaunlad sa bayan," giit ni Salceda.



DENR Region 2 gets ISO certification

Certification is for environment management

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

TUGUEGARAO CITY: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Cagayan Valley (Region 2) has secured its International Standards Organization (ISO) 9001:2015 registration certificate after passing the global standards of quality management system (QMS).

Corie Corpuz, DENR-Region 2 information officer, said the issued registration certificate — which is valid for three years — consists of public administration covering the conservation, management, development and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources.

"The Cagayan Valley region is the pilot region for DENR in Luzon for the ISO accreditation," Corpuz said.

She said that with the regional office, the provincial

environment and natural resources (PENR) office of Isabela province, and community environment and natural resources (CENR) office of San Isidro town in Isabela were also pilot offices.

It was the Anglo Japanese American (AJA) Registrars, an international independent certification body, that conducted the audit and assessment of the management systems of DENR Region 2 against the requirements of ISO 9001:2015.

Corpuz said the third-party

auditors assessed three major processes. These are management processes (strategic and program planning, and performance evaluation), core processes (ENR conservation and development, ENR management and regulation, ENR law enforcement and monitoring), and support processes (financial management, human resource management, knowledge and information systems, property and supply management, general services, documented information management, legal support, issue management, and information, education and communication).

Engineer Marcos Dacanay, DENR Region 2 lead auditor and assistant regional director for management services, said ISO 9001:2015 specifies requirements for a quality management system that employs international standards.

"Through the ISO certification, we ensure that our internal and external stakeholders are

satisfied with the quality of service we provide them without sacrificing our laws, rules and regulations," Dacanay said.

Lawyer Antonio Abawag, DENR Region 2 executive director, lauded the QMS Core Team and Internal Quality Audit (IQA) Team for successfully facilitating the rigorous requirements, particularly in putting office procedures in proper order.

The QMS Core Team was composed of the assistant regional directors, division chiefs, PENRO of Isabela and CENRO of San Isidro.

Members of the IQA Team were PENRO Marlon Agnar, Planning and Management Division chief Lea Daquioag, Finance Division chief Rommel Valdez, Enforcement Division chief Joel Daquioag, CENR officer Felix Ganapin, CENR officer Federico Cauilan Jr. and Management Services Division chief Mylene Madduma.



Pansang, DENR asam ang 3rd W

Nais nina Ralph Pansang at Melvin Bangal na pamunuan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa ikatlong sunod na panalo habang hanap naman ng paraan para makabalik sa win column ang Depeart-

ment of Agriculture sa 8th UNTV Cup 2019 eliminations bukas sa Pasig City Sports Center.

Umiskor ng tig-21 points sina Pansang at Bangal nang sorpresang ambusin ng bagong salta sa taunang torneo para sa mga public servant

ang Philippine National Police nitong Oktubre 2, 88-77, para asahan ulit laban sa Judiciary Magis mamayang alas-2:00 ng hapon.

Babawi naman si former UST star Emerson Oreta ng DA Food Masters sa pagkakapos ng 28 points niya sa taob ng team niya kontra defending champion Armed Forces of the Philippines, pagharap sa alas-5:00 ng hapon sa PhilHealth Plus (1-2).

Papagitnaan rin NHA Builders (2-1) kontra GSIS Furies (0-3) sa alas-3:30 ng hapon. **(Aivan Episcopo)**



Nangako si John Derrick Dizon na kakayod para sa NHA Builders kontra GSIS Furies sa 8th UNTV Cup 2019 eliminations bukas sa Pasig City Sports Center. (BM)



PH waters to reopen for foreign research soon

METRO Manila (CNN Philippines) — The government will soon lift the ban on foreign marine research in Philippine waters, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. said Friday.

"We will build the national academic research fleet, and we will lift shortly the moratorium on marine scientific research by foreign governments and institutions," Esperon said

in a media briefing.

Esperon told CNN Philippines that the moratorium was issued by President Rodrigo Duterte mid-2018.

Malacañang in February 2018 said foreigners will be allowed to do research as long as they get approval from the National Security Council, but Esperon said he has not granted any application since then because of the moratorium.

Esperon added that the processing of permits to foreign scientists and researchers will reopen "upon the suggestion of the academe."

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro "Teddy Boy" Locsin, Jr. said in August that foreign survey ships will still be allowed in the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) if the research would be led by Filipinos. This has been the government's condition.



Groups commit to address biodiversity threats

BY MA. ALEXANDRA MILAN

THOUSANDS gathered recently at Quezon City Memorial Circle to celebrate the Walk for Creation 2019 and open the Season of Creation 2019 with the theme "The Web of Life."

The Global Catholic Climate Movement-Pilipinas initiated the event for the last two years in commemoration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. About 5,000 congregated at the Liwasang Aurora for the celebration, including Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle who presided over the Mass for the event.

Part of the event was a discussion on biodiversity conservation by J. Kahlil Panopio, a conservation specialist at Haribon Foundation. Highlighting the current state of the Philippine Environment, Panopio emphasized Walk for Creation 2019 is a great opportunity to raise awareness about existing species in the country and what stakeholders can do to help various conservation activities.

PH biodiversity threats

The forest cover all over the country has been dropping over the years. From having 60 percent in the 1920s, it dropped to 34 percent

in the 1970s until it reached 22.93 percent in 2015.

"These decreases are alarming," Panopio warned, as the country needs at least 54 percent forest cover for Philippine biodiversity to thrive. This includes the archipelago's various species of:

- plants (over 15,000 species with half being endemic to the Philippines);
- birds (593,258 are exclusive to the country);
- mammals (over 200 species of land mammals and 27 species of marine mammals);
- reptiles (more than 250, 66 percent are endemic);
- amphibians (77 percent are endemic); and
- invertebrates (22,000 mollusk species, over 20,900 insect species, and at least 484 hard coral species).

The national average of Philippine corals is also at crucial levels as there is only 22.8 percent of live hard coral cover today (about 30,000 square kilometers). Panopio added this endangers various water species such as the 120 Philippine endemic marine species, 344 water species, and 3,094 coral reef species.

Moreover, plant and wildlife species are facing grave threats such as destruction of habitats, heavily extractive industries, wild-

life trade, hunting, poaching, and unsustainable human practices.

Haribon reminded that threats to biodiversity contribute to increasing global temperatures, which will put every living organism — including humans — at risk of suffering if temperatures go beyond the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit.

"Awareness-raising programs like the Walk for Creation not only raise consciousness on these pressing issues, but it also calls on stakeholders to commit to sustainable actions that will help address the climate crisis," the group said.

Conservation work

Haribon Foundation, the Philippines' first environmental organization, has made its commitment to respond to biodiversity threats since the 1970s. The foundation strengthens the involvement of various sectors in forest governance through capacity building for forest wardens, community-based monitoring and reporting, building networks, and cooperating with various stakeholders (civil society groups, local government units, among others).

Haribon also advocates for the passage of the Sustainable Forest Management Bill in restoring and rehabilitating the Philippines'

forest cover.

Other participating organizations also made their contributions and commitments known. The Student Catholic Action of the Philippines launched the "Bamboohay Challenge," which aims to grow as much as 200,000 and more native bamboos, specifically at the threatened watershed areas of Metro Manila, in a year.

To support the country's forest restoration efforts, the Couples for Christ community also presented their tree planting and growing activities. Signature campaigns launched by the Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance and the Alyansa Tigil Mina to stop the construction of Kaliwa Dam and mining were also highlighted in the event.

At some point during the program, the Global Climate Catholic Movement also led a symbolic signing and reading of commitment to "care for our web of life."

All actors are encouraged to help in biodiversity conservation by learning more and spreading awareness about the state of the Philippine environment, practicing the 4R (reduce, reuse, recycle, refuse) at home, school or work, and by joining conservation activities such as tree planting drives that promote the use of native seedlings.



FROM A DISTANCE

VERONICA PEDROSA

Extinction Rebellion and other solutions

Twice this week I've woken up sweating and wild-eyed from dreams about the end of the world. I've been preoccupied by Extinction Rebellion (XR), a global nonviolent civil disobedience campaign, founded here in the UK. It is an extraordinary phenomenon in mass movements. "For the first time, you have ordinary people engaging with radical action. It's unique - I can't think of any [protest movement] historically happening in that way," a professor in environmental politics was quoted as saying.



XR say they are driven by the deep dissatisfaction of millions of people with the failure of government to act in view of the climate emergency and sixth mass extinction. You may also have heard of it as the Holocene or Anthropocene extinction of species as a result of human activity.

They say:

Government must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change.

Government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2025.

Government must create, and be led by the decisions of, a citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice.

It's caught on. Only founded a year ago, there are now an estimated 485 Extinction Rebellion affiliates across the globe. Over two weeks this month, they tried to shut down 60 cities, including London, New York, Buenos Aires, Sydney, Cape Town and Mumbai. Government buildings, airports and financial districts will all be targeted with protests aiming for maximum disruption to provoke urgent political action.

The campaign is a loose network organised along deeply radical and yet time-honored principles for mass-based movements. It's put the climate crisis back on the agenda as ordinary people, young and old and from all walks of life, have come forward to claim the issue and show they are willing to take part in actions that bring the workings of capitalism to a standstill and even risk arrest. This is no longer the province of what were once seen as eco-extremists. There is a widespread understanding now that every aspect of our way of life must be challenged in real, profound and inescapable ways. "The greatest challenge the Anthropocene poses may be to our sense of what it means to be human" wrote Roy Scranton in 2013.

XR actions resonate particularly in the Philippines with our own homegrown non-violent struggles to overthrow leaders starting with Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. The methods and mobilisation of the group have come under scrutiny because of its apparent extraordinary success. Disobedience is at the heart of non-violent struggle. "We know through painful experience that freedom is never given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed," wrote Martin Luther King Jr. XR has done its homework and new members are supplied with online resources to understand how and why it's taken this course. Its strategy is influenced by studies that revealed that campaigns of non-violent resistance have been twice as effective as ones which used violence in achieving their goals. The research shows that the numbers matter too, finding that campaigns that involved more than 3.5 percent of the population invariably succeeded.

The group's principles are designed to shape an organisation fit for purpose:

- *"We have a shared vision of change—creating a world that is fit for generations to come.*
- *We set our mission on what is necessary—mobilising 3.5% of the population to achieve system change by using ideas such as "momentum-driven organising" to achieve this.*
- *We need a regenerative culture—creating a culture that is healthy, resilient, and adaptable.*
- *We openly challenge ourselves and this toxic system, leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.*
- *We value reflecting and learning, following a cycle of action, reflection, learning, and planning for more action (learning from other movements and contexts as well as our own experiences).*
- *We actively mitigate for power—breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation.*
- *We avoid blaming and shaming—we live in a toxic system, but no one individual is to blame.*
- *We are a non-violent network using non-violent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change.*
- *We are based on autonomy and decentralisation—we collectively create the structures we need to challenge power.*

Anyone who follows these core principles and values can take action in the name of Extinction Rebellion." (my italics)

XR is just one dimension of the enormous global outcry to save the planet. The Philippine government had its own rebellion in August against a huge threat to the environment in the form of plastic pollution, when President Duterte declared "We are not the world's dumpsite!" Plastic imports to the Philippines have risen by 150 percent from 2016 and the government declared a three-month moratorium.

But that's not going to solve the problem if you bear in mind that 350 million tons of plastic are being produced each year. Eight million tons of plastic enter the ocean every year. If waste management practices don't improve, scientists predict this amount could increase tenfold by 2025. Half of all plastics are single-use applications, used just once and then disposed of. We don't know how long it takes for plastic to break down. It's estimated it could take thousands of years to degrade. Plastic acts as a sink for chemicals already in the environment. The material is able to attract these chemicals and transport them long distances. Studies show plastic chemicals can act as endocrine disruptors. Endocrine disruption is linked to health effects like cancer, birth defects, and developmental problems in children.

Plastic waste is choking our rivers and seas, threatening ecosystems and livelihoods in South East Asia. Striving for cleaner seas, less plastic wasted and a more circular economy requires fundamental changes throughout the plastic value chain.

I'll be in Bangkok next month to support a regional initiative to find solutions to get rid of the plastic, organised by the UN Environment Programme with support from the Swedish government. They say "SEA of Solutions is a conference to inspire market-based solutions and encourage enabling policies to prevent marine plastic pollution in South East Asia."

I'll keep you posted.

You can find more information about SEA of Solutions at <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/conference/sea-solutions-2019>



Business climate reform slows in East Asia and Pacific

Economies in the East Asia and Pacific region carried out 33 business-climate-enhancing reforms during the past year, and while many economies in the region make doing business easy for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs by global standards, the overall pace of reforms slowed, the World Bank Group's latest Doing Business 2020 study says.

The reform impetus in the East Asia and Pacific region continues, with significant improvements made by some economies, such as China.

The number of reforms in the region fell by ten over the 12-month period to May 1 and reforms were implemented in fewer than half of its economies (12 out of 25). Even so, five East Asia and Pacific economies are among the top 25 global performers, including Singapore (2nd), Hong Kong SAR, China (3rd); Malaysia (12th); Taiwan, China (15th); and Thailand (21st). China is among the top 10 improvers for a second consecutive year.

"The reform impetus in the East Asia and Pacific region continues, with significant improvements made by some economies, such as China," said Rita Ramalho, Senior Manager of the World Bank's Global Indicators Group, which produces the study. "Sustained progress is key to improving the domestic business climate and enabling private enterprises."

With eight reforms, China improved regulation in most areas measured by Doing Business and implemented the most reforms in the region.



New visitor center at MACM dedicated to WWII heroes

BY RENE ACOSTA

THE Philippines and the United States recently marked the 75th year anniversary celebration of the return of American General Douglas MacArthur into the country by dedicating a new interpretative visitor center at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM), which tells and chronicles the sacrifices of soldiers during World War II.

The return of MacArthur through the "Leyte Landing" on October 20, 1944 ushered the liberation of the country from the clutches of invading Japanese imperial forces, whose savagery and notoriety were depicted by the infamous "Bataan Death March."

"We dedicate the new visitor center highlighting the war in the Western Pacific, early losses and also victory over the imperial forces of Japan," said Robert O. Wefald, commissioner of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), during the opening of the 11,000 square feet facility, which is located at the MACM in Taguig City.

The ABMC manages and maintains 15 World War II cemeteries abroad, including the 152-acre Manila American cemetery, which contains 17,000 graves of fallen soldiers and engraved tablets honoring 36,286 listed as missing in action. It also hosts the remains of at least 600 Filipino soldiers.

"We believe you will be impressed with its truthful and actual presentation of the history of the war in the Western Pacific.

This center include a story of valor and sacrifices, compelling artifacts along with thought-provoking film that conveyed a story of a Philippine-American history, our shared history and a shoulder-to-shoulder fight for freedom," said Wefald.

The interpretative visitor center, the first among US cemeteries in the Pacific, include an exhibit gallery and a modern theater that features a 17-minute film showing the gallantry and sacrifices of Filipino and American troops during the war in the country and in the whole Pacific.

"Those who are interred in these hallowed grounds, we keep our promise, we will not forget. Your sacrifice will have meaning," said Wefald.

The unveiling of the center comes amid the ongoing effort of the US through the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPMAA) to identify all those who have been missing from the war.

"This is a distinct honor to share with you this dedication on this hallowed grounds. Hallowed because here lies fallen heroes... these thousands of crosses are a solemn reminder that freedom is not free. Through this center, their stories will come alive and their sacrifices will never be forgotten," said Kelly K. McKeague, director of the DPMAA.

He said that like the ABMC, his office is also tasked to honor those who have made the "ultimate sacrifice" by pursuing to the "fullest possible" the identification of soldiers listed as missing in action in the Philippines.

The accounting was being made in

coordination with other agencies of the government, including the National Museum, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of National Defense, Armed Forces of the Philippines, and the indigenous office.

Last month, the DPMAA successfully identified one of the previously unknown remains interred at the Manila American cemetery as those of Lt. Junior Grade James "Jimmy" Eugene Crotty, a member of the US Coast Guard, whose war exploits were recounted by McKeague.

Crotty, whose feats were remembered by the US military, especially the US Coast Guard whom he gave its first and only "Philippine defense battle streamer" that currently flies under its flag, died in Cabanatuan while being kept as a prisoner of war by Japanese forces.

Crotty was the sole member of the US Coast Guard posted with the naval shipyard in Cavite when Japanese troops bombed the facility in December 1941, forcing him to be added to the crewmen of US submarine mine sweeper USS Quail.

With the USS Quail, he laid mines in order to protect Manila Bay while helping guide other US submarines through the minefield as they supplied American and Filipino troops at Corregidor.

Crotty also led and joined missions back to Cavite to gather guns, ammunition and even fuel that were taken to Corregidor for its defense, while leading raids against Japanese depot and formations, delaying the fall of Bataan into the hands of Japanese troops.