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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Geohazard map dapat kabisado ng mga LGU

HINIMOK ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu ang lahat ng mga local government unit (LGU) na muling bisitahin ang geological hazard map na ibinahagi sa kanila ng national government at gamitin ito bilang gabay para sa paghahanda at pamamahala sa kalamidad.

Inihayag ito ni Cimatu sa gitna ng sunod-sunod na malalakas na lindol at aftershock gayundin ang mga nararanasang pag-ulan sa Mindanao ngayon.

Sinabi ni Cimatu na napakahalaga para sa mga LGU, lalo na sa Mindanao, na tingnan ang mga geohazard map na inihanda ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) at tandaan ang mga lugar na idineklara na mapanganib sa pagbaha at pagguho ng lupa.

"Ang pinakamahalagang papel na ginagampanan ng mga mapa na ito sa pagsalba ng buhay at mga ari-arian ay muling na-highlight ng mga lindol at walang tugil na pag-ulan na nararasan sa Mindanao," sabi ni Cimatu.

Inutusan na rin ni Cimatu ang MGB na tiyakin na lahat ng mga opisyal ng mga LGU ay mayroong kopya ng mga geohazard map kasma na ang mga nahalal sa kaunahang pagkakataon sa ginanap na eleksyon noong Mayo 2019.

Tinukoy ni Cimatu ang geohazard map bilang isang 'tool sa pag-save ng buhay'.

Maaari ring ma-access ang mga geohazard map sa website ng DENR (www.denr.gov.ph) at ng MGB (www.mgb.gov.ph). **(Riz Dominguez)**



DENR officers na magpapabaya sa greening program target, sisibakin

Sisibakin ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang sinumang frontline field officers na magpapabaya sa greening program target ng ahensiya.

Aniya ang isang field officer ay dapat na maisagawa ang 85-percent survival rate ng planted tree seedlings na nakalaan sa mga peoples organizations (POs) sa ilalim ng Expanded National Greening Program (E-NGP).

"I would like to let somebody take the command responsibility for these areas, it's very simple. I will relieve you if you cannot fulfill that. Yes, it's a tall

order." dagdag ni Cimatu.

Ang pahayag ay ginawa ni Cimatu nang manlumo sa nadiskubrang mababang survival rates ng mga seedlings na naitanim sa ilang PO-contracted areas na may 35 hanggang 50 percent lamang.

Mula 2011 hanggang July 2019 ay may halos 2-milyong hektarya ang nataniman ng may 1.7 bilyong tree seedlings na lumikha ng 4.73 milyong trabaho at nagbenepisyu ang may mahigit 670,000 upland dwellers. Karamihan sa planted sites ay nakakontrata sa POs. (Angie dela Cruz)



Picking on the wrong people

The new round of water rationing resorted to by the two water concessionaires due to the low water level at Angat Dam in Bulacan brings to fore a huge problem which has been left unaddressed by our government for decades now – the absence of a new water source.

No less than the head of the National Water Resources Board has claimed that government had been slow to find alternatives to Angat Dam, which supplies as much as 97 percent of the water requirements of Metro Manila and portions of nearby provinces.

HIDDEN AGENDA



MARY ANN LL. REYES

Even Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System chief regulator Patrick Ty himself has admitted that government was partly to blame for the water shortage because of its failure to do what had been on the drawing board way back a half-century ago, which is to build an alternative water source for Metro Manila's ever-burgeoning population.

As early as the '70s, a number of alternative water sources have already been identified, including the Kaliwa Dam in Quezon and the Laiban Dam in Rizal. Government at present reportedly wants to accelerate the implementation of the New Centennial Water Source project (Kaliwa and Laiban) but opposition from environmental and indigenous peoples' groups has kept the project from moving forward.

Some critics have been blaming Maynilad and Manila Water for failing to build a new water source. They have refused to acknowledge the fact that the two are mere water distributors and that it is the job of the MWSS to look for one.

MWSS knew for decades that reliance on Angat Dam had to end soon. Various international organizations have produced studies warning our government that dams only last 50 years. Angat Dam was built in the '60s which means that it is way past its useful life. The dam's reservoir also lies on top of a fault line and cracks have already weakened the dam. Fortunately, strengthening or rehabilitation works have extended its usefulness. But for how long?

For its part, Maynilad last week pointed out that as a water distributor, it can only distribute the water volume it receives from raw water sources. It said that government has claimed responsibility for the development of raw water sources, but the water concessionaires have been working with them to expedite the process because of the urgency of meeting the supply needs of their customers.

Two months ago, Reps. Luis Campos Jr. and Winston Castelo said the administration of former president Noynoy Aquino should share the blame for the worsening

water crisis because his government rejected several proposals in 2012 to undertake long-term solutions to preempt the problem for being redundant. Wouldn't it be better for consumers to have an oversupply of water than suffer from lack of it?

Aside from wrongfully blaming them for failing to develop new water sources, the two concessionaires are also being wrongly blamed for the lack of sewerage and wastewater treatment systems for Metro Manila's 14 million water consumers.

Maynilad has spent P46.7-billion on wastewater treatment facilities since 1997 even if it has collected only P38.07 billion in sewage fees over same period. It is also setting aside P200 billion to build 26 new STPs and install 425 kilometers of new sewer lines from 2019 to 2037.

Maynilad and Manila Water could have done more in the area of sewerage and wastewater treatment, if only other government agencies tasked to implement the Clean Water Act have done their job.

Thus, Maynilad and MWC have not been remiss in their tasks as claimed by their critics who have heaped the blame solely on the two concessionaires for the failure to build enough STPs and other wastewater treatment facilities as mandated under the CWA.

Recently, the Supreme Court ordered both Maynilad and MWC to pay a fine of P921.5 million for violating the CWA, which the two are appealing because they were given by the SC in an earlier ruling until 2037 to complete their task.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the lead agency responsible for implementing the CWA, has not even drawn up a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) Action Plan, which includes setting the goals

and targets for a sewerage or septage program. How can the DENR blame the two concessionaires, let alone impose multimillion-peso penalties against them, when it is the one that has bungled its job under the CWA?

Housing scam

The Iloilo City government has a lot of explaining to do in connection with a multi-million peso low-cost housing project turned ghost project.

The project, which called for the construction of 413 low-cost housing units in the Pavia district, was funded via a P125-million bond flotation in 2001. The debt has since then ballooned to P137 million, with interest mounting as the years go by, and the burden of paying more resting on the shoulders of taxpayers.

To date, not a single unit has been built.

In 2002, the project's subcontractors abandoned their work, claiming that the contractor ABE Builders did not pay them a single centavo. The complaint reached the Iloilo City council, which the following year recommended rescinding the contract with ABE Builders, requiring the contractor to pay damages, and charging certain city officials and the contractor for graft, including ex-mayor Mansueto Malabor, incumbent Mayor Jerry Treñas, and the contractor.

In 2005, the Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas Primo Miro resolved to suspend some city officials and indict them before the Sandiganbayan. Five years later, OIC and Deputy Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro gave the go-ahead to the Miro resolution but removed Treñas and several others from the list of city officials to be indicted. Casimiro also ordered the Ombudsman-Visayas office to dig deeper into the Iloilo housing scam.

Until now, Iloilo City residents are still waiting for answers.

For comments, e-mail at mareyes@philstarmedia.com



POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Tax officials' perks, not the lowly 'tuyo'

IT SEEMS the multibillions raised from higher taxes are not enough to support heightened government spending and the newly acquired expensive tastes of officials, so there is a renewed search for more ways of extracting blood from taxpayers.

Some health officials, for instance, are thinking of taxing such food items as *tuyo* and *daing*. These fishery items associated with the modest diet of low-income Filipinos are processed using salt, which is linked to some ailments – ergo, qualifying them as source of another “sin tax.”

(*Tuyo's* being eaten mainly by the poor may have to be qualified, as a Business Class passenger on a Philippine Airlines flight will tell you after partaking of the gourmet *tuyo* that is served to homesick *balikbayans* who ask for it.)

The better known “sin taxes” are those slapped on such vice-related items as alcohol and tobacco, as well as sugary drinks, upon which heavier levies have been imposed on the theory that the resulting prohibitive price would cut addiction to them.

But on *tuyo* and *daing*? The insensitive idea of levying a “sin tax” on these items prompted us days ago to make the somewhat corny comment on Twitter: “It’s a SIN to tax even the DYING.”

We proposed instead that a 50-percent gross tax be imposed on all public funds being paid to or collected by senators, congressmen, Cabinet members and other high officials on top of their regular salaries.

If half of their allowances and perks is withheld at source, the collection would constitute a sizable chunk of the millions being paid to or spent by ranking officials, many of whom get habituated to a life of ease and luxury that lifts them above the masses.

Health Undersecretary Eric Domingo told the media in Malacañang on Wednesday that raising the taxes on salted food such as *tuyo* and *daing* was being considered for health reasons.

Domingo said they still have no guidelines on that “sin tax” option, but pointed out that excessive salt in the diet “is directly correlated to hypertension, heart disease and kidney problems.”

In the last Congress, a House bill was filed seeking to impose a P1 tax per milligram of salt in junk food, canned goods and processed food in excess of one-third of the daily intake recommended by health authorities.

• Claims of Manila Water disputed

WE PRINT below excerpts from reactions to the letter of Jose Rene Gregory D. Almendras, president/CEO of Manila Water Co. Inc., explaining the firm’s failure to provide sufficient potable water and an adequate sewerage system for their customers in Metro Manila. See: <https://tinyurl.com/y2cgp6g8>

***a.socrates** <hornetshaker@yahoo.com> – Providing water supply is mainly the government’s responsibility because of its size and the need to exercise eminent domain over private property and communal lands, etc. Mr. Almendras was Cabinet secretary and one of the most influential members of then President Aquino’s Cabinet. Why did he not do anything to improve the water supply for Metro Manila? There are a number of



feasibility studies and even potential funding available. Mr. Almendras should not blame the government since he was a key part of it for six years. Maybe he should be a proactive reformer today by giving the public a blow by blow narrative as to why government did not improve the water supply. Is it because the decision-making process in government is based on crisis? No crisis, no action.

***arwin guste** <arwinriskmanager@gmail.com> – I would not recommend encouraging your readers to use deep wells. Please research what happened to Jakarta and why it is sinking. (We have notes on this, but for lack of space we defer sharing them now. –fdp)

***Willy Segovia** <wls.segovia@gmail.com> – Mr. Almendras says Manila Water “is compliant with Section 8 of the Clean Water Act and has connected households with existing sewage lines to sewerage systems available in 2009.” No, they are not compliant with the five-year deadline. RA 9275 was enacted March 2004. The five-year deadline lapsed in March 2009. That was 10 years ago. That’s why they have been fined by the Supreme Court. If they are compliant, they would not be fined.

(For reference, Section 8 of the Clean Water Act reads: Domestic Sewage Collection, Treatment and Disposal. – Within five (5) years following the effectivity of this Act, the Agency vested to provide water supply and sewerage facilities and/or concessionaires in Metro Manila and other highly urbanized cities (HUCs) as defined in RA 7160, in coordination with LGUs, shall be required to connect the existing sewage line found in all subdivisions, condominiums, commercial centers, hotels, sports and recreational facilities, hospitals, market places, public buildings, industrial complex and other similar establishments including households to available sewerage system. Provided, That the said connection shall be subject to sewerage services charge/fees in accordance with existing laws, rules or regulations unless the sources had already utilized their own sewerage system: Provided, further, That all sources of sewage and septage shall comply with the requirements herein.)

Mr. Almendras says “...and has connected to... sewerage systems available in 2009.” It is clear that Manila Water accepted responsibility for providing a sewerage system at the East Zone when they signed as concessionaire in 1997. They’re just disputing the deadline.

But they did not bother to build sewerage from 1997 to 2004 (seven years). Then RA 9275 came in 2004 and gave them a five-year deadline which they could not meet. (That’s 12 years in total). From 2009, another 10 years have passed. (That’s 22 years in total). Now they want it postponed until 2037 (That’s another 18 years or 40 years in total). They want 40 years to get this sewerage job done!

During these 40 years, meanwhile, Manila Water charges 30 percent of the water billed to subscribers for sewerage (disguised as environmental fee). That’s how billions are made, part of which they are now investing overseas, such as the 18+ percent equity they have acquired in the water company in Thailand.

NOTA BENE: Postscripts are archived at manilamail.com. Author is on Twitter as @FDPascual. Email feedback to fdp333@yahoo.com



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Dahil sa sunod-sunod na lindol **Phivolcs dapat isama sa DDR**

IPINAKITA ng mga isyung lumitaw pagkatapos ng mga lindol sa Mindanao kamaakailan na patuloy pa rin, na sadyang kailangang isama ang Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) sa panukalang Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR), ayon kay Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda.

Ang magkasunod na lindol na yumarig sa Tulan, Cotabato ay nag-iwan ng 16 taong patay at mahigit 400 na nasaktan habang dalawa pa ang nawawala. Sinira din ng lindol ang mga 3,220 imprestruktura at nagtaboy ng mga pamilya mula sa kanilang mga tahanan at tanggapan. Marami sa kanila ang lito at nagpanik. May naulat ding mga sunog at pagguho ng lupa.

Si Salceda na chairman ng House Ways and Means Committee, at pangu-

nahing may-akda ng DDR bill. Pinuna niyang lumitaw ang hindi magkakatugmang tugon ng marami sa mga kaganapan matapos ang mga lindol, gaya ng pagragasa pababa ng mga call center agents mula sa ikaanim na palapag nilang kinalalagyan.

"Kasama sa mga sadyang kailangan ng DDR ang Phivolcs para sa mahusay na pagsusuri ng mga kahinaan, kumprehensibong tugon sa mga lito, at "vulnerability reduction and integrated response," paliwanag ni Salceda.

Lilikhain ng DDR ang 'Disaster Risk Analysis and Assessment Bureau (DRAAB)', na siyang mangangasiwa sa pagsusuri ng mga panganib na kinakaharap ng mga pamayanan tungo sa pagtatatag ng tunay na makataong early warning system sa mga pamayanan.



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QUAKE SURVIVORS DESPERATE FOR AID

STORY BY THE INQUIRER STAFF

Villagers displaced by three major earthquakes that struck Mindanao are openly appealing for emergency supplies as the government and private groups struggle to send food, water and temporary shelter. Relief work is being hampered as many responders are disaster victims themselves.

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**By Williamor Magbanua,
Edwin Fernandez,
Eldie Aguirre,
and Germalina Lacorte**
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MAKILALA, COTABATO— Scores of villagers displaced by three recent earthquakes that struck Mindanao were growing desperate for help and have taken their appeal for aid to roadsides as the government and private groups struggled to distribute relief goods to stricken areas, some cut off by landslides.

At Barangay Malasila in Makilala, Cotabato province, groups of residents held up signs in English and the local language pleading for supplies, specifically rice, water and medicine, to people passing through their communities.

Some received money from travelers on the highway that links Cotabato to Davao City.

Several Malasila menfolk said they returned to their homes to gather root crops, like sweet potatoes or bananas, that they could take back to their families to eat in their roadside tents.

They said the quakes had cut off water supply from traditional sources like deep wells and springs.

Many of the villagers, including members of the Manobo tribe, already were living hand-to-mouth as rubber tappers before the disaster struck and were now out of work and have no money to buy food at the market in the town center several kilometers away.

'Endless appreciation'

Some netizens posted photos and comments on social media to support the villagers' appeal for help.

"No more food available in our place, we no longer have rice, our water sources had dried up after the earthquake," Shiena Mae Villeza said in a Facebook post.

"For all who responded to our appeals, our endless appreciation for your help," Villeza said, adding: "Your generosity will be reciprocated by God."

The death toll from the second and strongest quake, a 6.6-magnitude on Oct. 29, had risen to 14, bringing the number of fatalities from the three quakes to 22, based on a report on Saturday by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

The NDRRMC said more than 146,700 people from nearly 150 villages in central Mindanao and nearby Davao region were affected. Up to 20,635 were housed in temporary government shelters and 6,850 others were staying with relatives in safe areas, it said.

Off-limits

Many structures, including homes and buildings damaged by a 6.3-magnitude temblor on Oct. 16, were declared off-limits following the Oct. 29 quake and the 6.5-magnitude quake that struck two days later.

All the three major quakes and scores of aftershocks were centered near Tulunan, Cotabato, and caused by the movement of the Cotabato Fault System, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

The Department of Social Welfare and Development was coordinating with the military to fly relief supplies, including rice, food packs, sleeping kits and tents made of tarpaulin, the NDRRMC said.

Red Cross volunteers, including actress Angel Locsin, were seen distributing food, water and other relief supplies in Malasila and the village of Batasan, also in Makilala.



Quake survivors Desperate for Aid

Fight over tarp

In a tragic turn, a man stabbed and killed his neighbor in a scuffle over possession of a piece of tarpaulin at Barangay Indangan in Makilala.

Village chair Napoleon Inggong on Saturday said the victim, Michael Danga, 21, was preparing to put up his tent on Friday in front of the barangay hall when the suspect, Eric Matango, 40, a Dole Stanfilco worker, accused the latter of allegedly taking his tarpaulin.

A fight ensued ending in the death of Danga, Inggong said.

The local aid delivery system has been hampered because many of the barangay officials in the quake-hit towns were also quake victims themselves.

In Digos City, the local government said the homes of at

least 130,000 people, about 65 percent of the population, had been destroyed or damaged by the quakes.

Most residents, fearing aftershocks, have refused to sleep in their homes at night. Those who lost their homes prefer to pitch tents in open fields and others set up temporary shelters close to their damaged houses. Some sleep in hammocks under the trees.

Due to the sharp rise in demand, the price of tarpaulin has doubled.

Digos Mayor Josef Cagas said he was seeking ways to make tarpaulin one of the essential items subjected to price freeze during calamities.

Quick response funds

Acting Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado said funds were already available for release to the quake-hit areas. In case they were not enough, local governments should request for more money from the national government, he said.

"Departments have quick response funds, and that's what they are currently doing—they are downloading funds to their regional, provincial and city offices to fast-track the government's response," Avisado told reporters in a text message on Saturday.

Damage assessment

The Department of Finance had already asked all treasurers and assessors of earthquake-affected local governments "to submit their estimates of the damages so we can determine the amount required." Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said in a Viber message to reporters also on Saturday.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, who is the government's officer in charge while President Duterte is attending the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Thailand, has directed Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana to lead all earthquake relief efforts.

"The public is advised to coordinate directly with the [Department of National Defense] and/or National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council to ensure the efficient conduct of relief efforts, including the distribution of relief goods and rescue operations," he said.

Call to DBM, DepEd

At the Senate, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Saturday called on the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Department of Education (DepEd) to immediately augment the DepEd's quick response fund (QRF) to quickly resume normal school operations in towns affected by the quakes.

He said the DepEd's P2-billion QRF this year had already been depleted by rehabilitation needs from last year's disasters.

Undersecretary Ricardo Jalad, NDRRMC executive director, on Saturday said 757 schools were damaged by the quakes.

According to Gatchalian, the additional QRF funds for DepEd can be sourced from the rest of this year's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Program's P2-billion allocation. —WITH REPORTS FROM BEN O. DE VERA, JHESSET O. ENANO AND MELVIN GASCON INQ

The Philippine Daily Inquirer has joined efforts to extend comfort and assistance to families affected by the earthquakes in Mindanao. Cash donations may be sent to the Inquirer Foundation Corp. through its Banco de Oro (BDO) current account No. 007960018860. Donors may also inquire with the Inquirer's corporate affairs office through email at foundation@inquirer.com.ph.