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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Tamaraw docu to raise funds for endangered mammal

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Through the launch of a documentary on the tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it aims to raise funds for the critically endangered animal found only on Mindoro island.

"Suwag o Suko: Saving the Tamaraw from Extinction" is a one-hour film that tackles the economic, social and cultural significance of the tamaraw, as well as the incessant efforts and hard work by tamaraw rangers who put their lives at risk to protect it from hunters.

The documentary, which premiered at the National Museum of Natural History on Oct. 30, was produced through the partnership of the DENR and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of the United Nations Development Program, with the help of young film practitioners. The screening capped the celebration of October as Tamaraw Month.

DENR Assistant Secretary and concurrent Biodiversity Management Bureau director Ricardo Calderon expressed hope the documentary would inspire more Filipinos to help save the tamaraw from extinction.

"I hope every single Filipino will have the opportunity to seeing real-life tamaraws today, and the coming years, decades and centuries," Calderon said.

The film is scheduled for regular screening in cinemas nationwide. It targets to raise P2 million to purchase patrol gear and equipment and to cover accident insurance of the rangers.

At the same time, Calderon said proceeds of the documentary will go to the DENR's Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP), which seeks to address the decline in tamaraw population.

Tamaraw, also called dwarf water buffalo, is the largest native land mammal in the Philippines. From 10,000 heads in the 1900s, the tamaraw population has dramatically decreased to only 480 heads as of latest count, making it among the world's most endangered animals.

Illegal logging, poaching, over hunting, intensive farming and the establishment of ranch in the forests of Mindoro had all contributed to the depletion of the tamaraw population.

In 1982, the Tamaraw Gene Pool was established under the program's captive breeding component. However, the 20 tamaraws originally captured for the gene pool have died. At present, TCP is focused on managing wild population and habitat, and the conduct of information and education campaigns on the importance of saving the tamaraw.



Underperforming environ officers face ax

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu has warned that he will relieve the department's frontline field officers who fail to meet the goals set under the Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP).

DENR field officials are required to meet the 85-percent survival rate of planted tree seedlings contracted to peoples' organizations (POs) under the program.

"I would like to let somebody take command responsibility for these areas," Cimatu said.

The DENR chief addressed Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officers (PENROs) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Officers (CENROs) in a recent training course conducted

by the DENR's Environment and Natural Resources Academy. A total of 181 DENR workers completed the training.

"I am designating the PENROs and CENROs as plantation managers. It's very simple. I will relieve you if you cannot fulfill that. Yes, it's a tall order. Even if you have to go there at least every two weeks," Cimatu stressed.

Cimatu issued the warning as he expressed his disappointment over the low survival rate for seedlings planted in some PO-contracted areas, ranging only from 35 to 50 percent.

It is for this reason the DENR suspended the scheme of contracting POs for the ENGP this year. Instead, the agency focused on the

rehabilitation and protection efforts in PO-contracted plantation sites established before 2019.

From 2011 to July this year, almost two million hectares have been planted with 1.7 billion tree seedlings. It generated 4.73 million jobs benefiting more than 670,000 upland dwellers. Most of the planted sites have been contracted to POs.

From 2016 to 2018 alone, POs accounted for 573,735 hectares under the NGP, consisting of 24,672 plantation sites.

NGP contracts with POs over a three-year period, during which the NGP partners enjoy compensation for seedling production, site preparation, tree planting, maintenance and protection.

- Rhodina Villanueva

MWSS TOLD

Cut Wawa Dam lag'

By Maria Romero, Keith Calayag and AJ Bajo

With the Kaliwa Dam project in Quezon and Rizal provinces yet to take off, another solution to the present water shortage in Metro Manila has been staring the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) as far back as seven months ago.

Delays, however, marked the implementation of an offer by

Prime Infra to develop the Wawa Bulk Water Supply project (Wawa JVCo) as a new water resource "at no cost to the government."

The MWSS is only set to "tackle and approve" what was supposed to be the already greenlighted Wawa Dam project next week, extending the delay for the Enrique Razon-led

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The MWSS is only set to "tackle and approve" what was supposed to be the already greenlighted Wawa Dam project next week

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Prime Metroline Infrastructure Holding Corp., which has been waiting for the cue to start since the project was earlier approved in May.

Seven months ago, the Manila Water Co. (MWC) reported to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) that it had entered into an agreement with Prime Infra for the Wawa JVCo. But since the disclosure, the project remained at a snail's pace.

But Razon said he hopes the MWSS will soon take on the final steps of the project so that both the government and the proponents of the Wawa Dam project can "finally deliver a project of critical importance to the residents of Metro Manila."

In reply, MWSS chairman Reynaldo Velasco vowed that the MWSS Board will "tackle and approve" the project in its forthcoming meeting set on 14 November.

He also admitted any further delay to the construction of the Wawa Dam project may contribute to the depleting

water supply in Metro Manila.

Velasco said the board already approved most of the provisions of the agreements, particularly the P1.37 cost and tariff per cubic meter, which would be passed on the consumers later on.

In a separate interview, MWC head of Corporate Communications Jeric Sevilla told *Daily Tribune* they expect the MWSS to fast-track the approval of the Wawa Dam Project.

Sevilla said a new water source "will help augment the current supply in the short-term." However, he noted that the regulator should also work doubly hard to develop medium- to long-term water sources "to ensure the sustainability of water supply."

Set for completion in 2021, the Wawa Dam project is expected to add some 80 million liters per day (MLD) to MWC's supply. By 2025, it is projected to produce over 500 MLD.

The project involves the development of a water supply facility at the Wawa catchment area from Rodriguez Municipality to Antipolo City in Rizal

Province to provide both raw or treated water to consumers and distributors in Metro Manila and nearby communities.

The water supply project is a joint venture between Razon's Prime Infra and Oscar Violago's San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders and Developers Corp. They hope to break ground for the project by 2020.

Currently, there are many projects in the pipeline to solve the water woes, such as rainwater harvesting and water desalination plants, but the construction of the China-funded Kaliwa Dam remains Plan A, according to presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo.

Panelo underscored that should all else fail, the President, as head of the state, will be forced to use special powers to take over operations of water concessionaires to solve the crisis.

Based on the latest monitoring of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) as of Wednesday morning, the water level in Angat Dam is now at 188.33 meters, slightly lower than Tuesday's 188.39, while the level at Ipo Dam rose marginally to 100.54 meters.

Meanwhile, House Committee on Metro Manila Development chairman Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (Manila,

1st District) yesterday told water concessionaires to shape up and meet the conditions in their agreement with the government for water distribution.

Then, he warned them of the likelihood of Congress placing them under franchise.

During a hearing on Wednesday on the continued water disruption in Metro Manila, Lopez said placing Maynilad and Manila Water under franchise would give Congress more control over the companies.

The water supply project is a joint venture between Razon's Prime Infra and Oscar Violago's San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders and Developers Corp. They hope to break ground for the project by 2020.

He said Congress can also categorize concessionaires as public utility or mandate businesses affecting public interest to be under legislative franchise or cut their income based on their performance.

Responding to Lopez, Maynilad chief operating officer Randolph Estrallado reminded Lopez that the

water concessionaires' contracts with the government have yet to expire.

Lopez also floated the possibility of declaring a national emergency amid the water crisis.

"If our providers in the water sector cannot provide, it is time to call for a national emergency."

NWRB executive director Sevilla David Jr. said the water interruptions in Metro Manila may continue until next year's rainy season if Angat Dam's water level does not reach 190 MLD by yearend.

In another development, Maynilad Water Services Inc. announced that it is spending at least P2 billion in capital expenditures for the deployment of five measures aimed at mitigating the impact of reduced water allocation to its customers.

The mitigation measures include the optimization of the Putatan Water Treatments 1 and 2, which will add a total of 60 million liters per day (MLD), and has been completed as of October; the reactivation of deep wells to add 52 MLD targeted for completion in December this year; and water loss recovery, which can bring 94 MLD, targeted for completion by February 2020.



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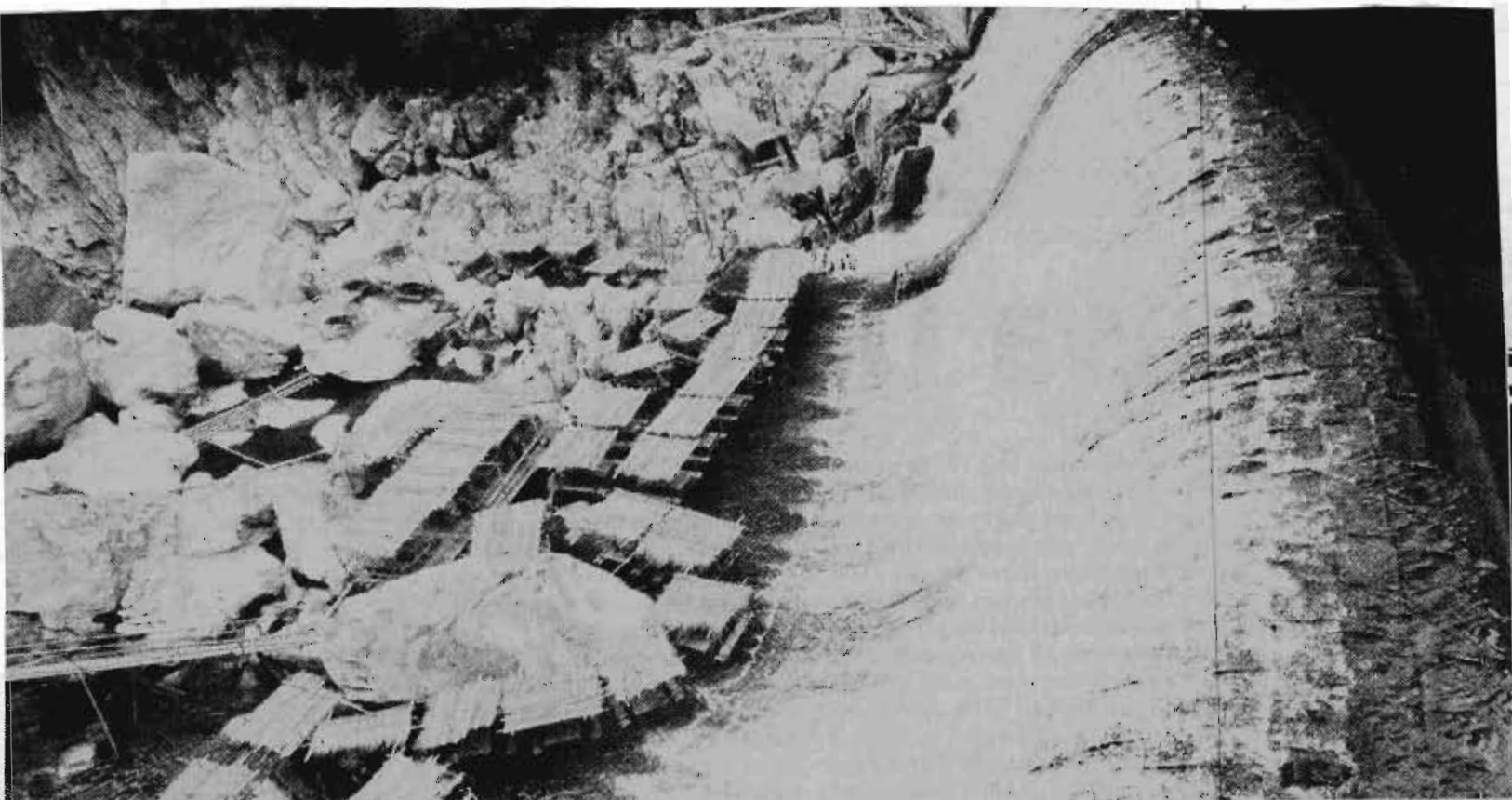
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LET the water flow as the MWSS receives snowballing calls for the Wawa Dam project.

MWC Head of Corporate Communications Jeric Sevilla said they expect the MWSS to fast-track the approval of the Wawa Dam Project



Water interruption may last

until March 2020

By **EDU PUNAY**

The water shortage in Metro Manila will continue until next year, regulators revealed dur-

ing a hearing at the House of Representatives yesterday.

Officials of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) and Metropolitan Waterworks

and Sewerage System (MWSS) told lawmakers that residents of Metro Manila would continue to experience rotational service interruption until March 2020 and might even again experience lack of supply in summer next year should there be no replenishment of supply in the dams.

NWRB executive director Sevillo David Jr. said the MWSS had decreased its allocation to water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water Co. Inc. to manage Angat's water supply to make it last until next summer.

"As of today, PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration) projects that the level of Angat Dam might drop to less than 190 meters if no significant rainfall comes within the year," David told the House committee on Metro Manila development committee during the hearing.

"Our available supply could last until summer next year, but we really have to manage it well and that means we need to continue with irregular allocation of water supply for Metro Manila," David stressed.

Committee chairman Manila Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez asked the government regulatory offices if they have contingency plans to address the problem.

In response, MWSS administrator Emmanuel Salamat

said there is a need to pursue the Sumag River diversion project in Quezon to address the water supply shortage in Metro Manila.

He explained the project, which will supplement the water coming from Umiray River going to the Angat Reservoir, is expected to provide Angat Dam 1.8 million liters per day (MLD).

"The project could be completed by next year, but it was put on hold due to an accident that killed six people," he lamented.

At the same hearing, PAGASA climatologist Junie Ruiz said there is a possibility that the water level in Angat Dam will not reach the 190-meter level by yearend.

Ruiz explained to lawmakers that Tropical Storm Quiel would have no significant impact on the water level in the dam in Bulacan that supplies 96 percent of Metro Manila's water demand.

He said another tropical cyclone may develop next week but there's no assurance that this would bring rains near Angat.

For his part, Maynilad chief operating officer Randolph Estrellado said they would study the option of cloud seeding.

Estrellado, however, assured their customers that water interruptions would not exceed 24 hours.

Maynilad and Manila Wa-

ter have both vowed to take necessary steps to mitigate the effects of low water supply.

Still, Lopez warned the concessionaires of possibly losing their contracts and an average of P6 billion in annual earnings if they fail to step up efforts in providing adequate water supply to Metro Manila and adjoining localities. "Unfortunately, they have not lived up to their commitment since they took over the water supply service in 1997. There is nothing wrong in engaging in business. What is wrong is if the one engaged in business is getting greedy," he told the two water firms.

While admitting there is no reason yet to declare a state of emergency to address an impending water supply, Lopez warned the MWSS and its two concessionaires of the possibility of granting legislative franchises to private water agencies. "There must be an assessment of the water provider's true capability," he added.

As of yesterday morning, Angat Dam's water level was at 188.34 meters, or 21.66 meters below its 210-meter normal high water level.

New water sources needed

The Philippines needs to look for new water sources to address the water crisis in the long-term, tycoon Manuel V. Pangilinan said yesterday.

Pangilinan, chairman of west zone water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc., pointed out that the growing population has triggered the need for additional sources of water supply.

"We really need new dams," Pangilinan stressed at a press conference at the Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC), the infrastructure conglomerate that is the parent company of Maynilad.

Pangilinan said that since MPIC first invested in Maynilad in 2006, the population coverage has grown by nearly one-third to 9.6 million while Maynilad has laid 3,126 kilometers of new pipes.

Non-revenue water (NRW) has been reduced to 27.1 percent as of end-September 2019 from 68 percent 13 years ago, saving almost one billion liters of water every day. He said this is enough water to provide the needs of a large city.

Pangilinan said Maynilad continues to invest heavily to reduce NRW.

Sounding the alarm on the water supply shortage in the country, Pangilinan said water levels in Angat have declined to disturbing lows.

"A combination of rising service level to an increased population, the El Niño drought this year and the failure of previous administrations to develop new water sources (or allow us to develop water sources ourselves) has

led to a shortfall in water supply," he said.

As of end-September, water level at Angat Dam is significantly below the ideal level to ensure that supply is adequate during the summer months of 2020.

To address the shortage, the company continues to build and expand drinking water facilities in its plant in Putatan in Muntinlupa, Maynilad president and CEO Ramonito Fernandez added.

Measures include the opening Putatan Water Treatment 2 in April this year, adding 100 MLD of water supply capacity immediately and a further 50 MLD by yearend.

Maynilad has already submitted a proposal for a third plant to be constructed in another part of Laguna de Bay.

The company is also continuing with its NRW reduction measures.



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Maynilad's average NRW measured at the district metered area level fell to 26.8 percent in the first nine months of 2019 from 30.5 percent for the same period in 2018 while average total NRW is now down to 39.1 percent. Both new numbers are record lows, Maynilad said.

The company is also working to tap small dams in Cavite by April 2020.

In all, these measures would translate to an additional 233 MLD to augment the current deficit of 230 MLD.

At present, Maynilad's mitigating measures are already creating additional supply of 100 MLD. - With Iris Gonzales



ECONSCIOUSNESS

Water world by 2050? Scientists sound alarm

Section Editor: JOHANNES L. CHUA

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

Coastal areas currently home to 300 million people will be vulnerable by 2050 to flooding made worse by climate change, no matter how aggressively humanity curbs carbon emissions, scientists said recently.

By mid-century and beyond, however, choices made today will determine whether Earth's coastlines remain recognizable to future generations, they reported in the journal *Nature Communications*.

Destructive storm surges fueled by increasingly powerful cyclones and rising seas will hit Asia hardest, according to the study.

More than two-thirds of the populations at risk are in China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Using a form of artificial intelligence known as neural networks, the new research corrects ground elevation data that has up to now vastly underestimated the extent to which coastal zones are subject to flooding during high tide or major storms.

"Sea-level projections have not changed," co-author Ben Strauss, chief scientist and CEO of Climate Central, a US-based non-profit research group, said.

"But when we use our new elevation data, we find far more

our lifetime," said lead author and Climate Central scientist Scott Kulp.

"As the tideline rises higher than the ground people call home, nations will increasingly confront questions about whether, how much and how long coastal defenses can protect them."

Several factors conspire to threaten populations living within a few meters of sea level. One is the expansion of water as it warms and, more recently, ice sheets atop

Greenland and Antarctica that have shed more than 430 billion tons per year over the last decade.

Since 2006, the waterline has gone up nearly four millimeters a year, a pace that could increase 100-fold going into the 22nd century if carbon emissions continue unabated, the UN Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) warned in a major report last month.

If global warming is capped below two degrees Celsius – the cornerstone goal of the Paris climate treaty – sea level is projected to rise about half-a-meter by 2100.

At current rates of carbon pollution however, the increase would be nearly twice as much.

Rooftops and trees

Major storms that until recently occurred once a century will, by 2050, happen on



Climate protesters gather in New York (AFP)

average once a year in many places, especially in the tropics, the IPCC report found.

Annual coastal flood damages are projected to increase 100 to 1,000-fold by 2100, it said.

Finally, many of the one billion people living at less than nine meters above sea level today are in urban areas literally sinking under their own weight.

Researchers studying the impact of rising seas on human settlements have long known that the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) data provided freely by NASA has a fairly wide margin of error. But about five years ago, Kulp and Strauss realized that – compared to more accurate data for the US gathered by laser-based systems on aircraft – SRTM was systematically showing elevations to be higher than they actually were.

A big part of the problem was that the NASA system mistook rooftops and trees for ground level.

"It turns out that for most of the global coast we didn't know the height of the ground beneath our feet," said Strauss.

The researchers detailed these shortcomings and the merits of their new system, called CoastalDEM, in peer-reviewed journals before matching them to population data in the new study.

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, a professor of climatology at Belgium's Universite Catholique de Louvain and a former IPCC vice-chair, said the new method represented "very significant progress" in understanding the risks posed by rising seas. (AFP)

people living in vulnerable areas that we previously understood."

With the global population set to increase two billion by 2050 and another billion by 2100 – mostly in coastal megacities – even greater numbers of people will be forced to adapt or move out of harm's way.

Already today, there are more than 100 million people living below high tide levels, the study found. Some are protected by dikes and levees, most are not.

Rising tides, sinking cities

"Climate change has the potential to reshape cities, economies, coastlines, and entire global regions within

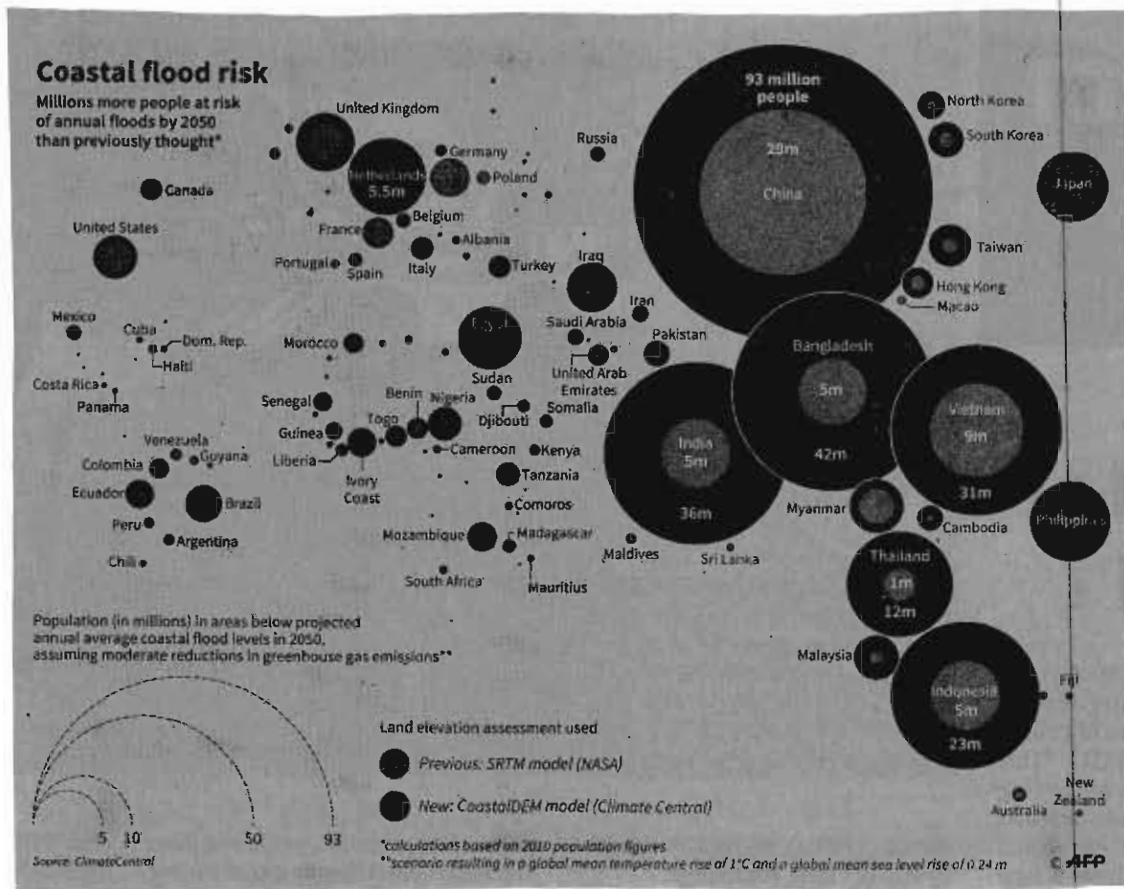


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Maynilad spending ₱2b to ease water problem in the west zone

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. will spend at least P2 billion to implement five programs to alleviate the water problem within its concession area in Metro Manila.

Maynilad president Ramoncito Fernandez said in a news briefing the five mitigating measures were meant to 233 million liters per day of water to its current supply of 2,000 MLD water and 300 MLD from Putatan water treatment plant.

Maynilad expanded the production of Putatan Plant 2 to 150 million MLD

from 100 MLD and increased the output of Putatan Plant 1 to 160 MLD from 150 MLD.

It also reactivated the decommissioned deep wells that would add 52 MLD by next month.

Maynilad said it was working to reduce non-revenue water to recover 94 MLD by February 2020 and started to tap small dams in Cavite and install mobile treatment plants to add 27 MLD to its current supply by April next year.

Fernandez said Maynilad started to

implement water interruption in some areas because of reduced water allocation from Angat Dam.

The water level in Angat Dam was at 188.34 meters, still below the year-end target of 210 meters—the level required to ensure adequate supply during the dry months.

Based on the simulation conducted by Maynilad with National Water Regulatory Board, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services

Administration, Angat Dam's water level would be between 185 and 189 meters.

"We support the call for new water sources like Kaliwa. If the government has approved our previous proposals for them to build Laiban and Agos River by 2016, Laiban should have been operational but unfortunately that has not been approved by the previous administration and this is one of the reasons why we have supply shortage," Fernandez said.

Jennifer B. Austria



MWSS starts yearly audit of Manila Water, Maynilad

BY JORDEENE B. LAGARE

THE MWSS Regulatory Office, the regulatory arm of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), officially commenced on Wednesday the annual audit of financial books of the concessionaires Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc.

In a statement posted on its official Facebook page, MWSS Chief Regulator Patrick Lester Ty said the regulatory financial audit is part of efforts "to more efficiently monitor the water concessionaires' compliance with the concession agreement and delivery of their service obligations."

Processes involved in the scrutiny of their financial books include the evaluation of the firms' historical (actual) cash flows wherein prudence and efficiency of incurred operating expenses and capital expenditures are assessed to determine possible disallowances.

The detailed audit report is ex-

pected to be unveiled by the first quarter of 2020, he added.

This would be the first time that the MWSS RO would conduct the regulatory financial audit that is usually done every five years, as stipulated in the concession agreements with Manila Water and Maynilad.

However, the regulator had intended to conduct the audit annually. This would be the first time that the audit will be done every year since its inception in 1997.

Section 13.2 of the agreement states the books and records of the concessionaires can be audited on an interim basis either by the agency or independent auditor, and that both companies are required to provide full support.

The MWSS RO shall be deliv-

ing into the books and records of Manila Water and Maynilad for the period of July 1, 2017 to December 31, 2018.

Recently, the MWSS RO commissioned Constantino and Partners (CP) to conduct the yearly financial audit.

"CP is an auditing firm accredited by the Philippine Board of Accountancy, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Insurance Commission of the Philippines, and the Philippine Bureau of Internal Revenue," Ty said.

He first unveiled the MWSS RO's plan of inspecting the books of the two concessionaires in March this year. "They have already signaled their cooperation with us, they will cooperate with us in our financial audit."

Water concessionaires face audit; Maynilad sets P2B investment

THE Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO) will conduct a yearly regulatory financial audit (RFA) on the two water concessionaires in Metro Manila to ensure compliance with the concession agreement and delivery of service obligations to customers.

This developed as Maynilad Water Services Inc. has lined up projects worth more than P2 billion said to mitigate the impact of reduced water allocation in its concession area as a result of the troubling water level in Angat dam.

Noting that that the current water level in Angat may close the year at "185-189 meters" Ramoncito Fernandez, Maynilad president, said the level indicates water supply that may not be enough for the demand come summer time and far from the ideal level of 210 meters.

"We're still cooperating on the reduced water allocation with MWSS (Metropolitan Water and Sewerage System) and NWRB (National Water Resources Board), and part of it is the rotational water interruption," said Fernandez.

As part of the P2 billion mitigating measure, Fernandez said Maynilad has increased the output

of its Putatan II water treatment plant to 150 million liters per day (MLD) as of October, while optimizing the output for its Putatan I facility, all sourcing water from Laguna de Bay.

The company likewise has coordinated with the NRWB for the reactivation of the decommissioned deep-well facilities in its franchise area, to source an extra 62MLD of water by yearend.

The company likewise intends to reduce its non-revenue water by another 95 million liters per day by February, while tapping into small water dams in Bacoor and Imus, Cavite to tap into another 27MLD of water by April next year.

Fernandez said all in all the company expects to get 206MLD of water from the initiatives in time for summer, and further increase it to 233MLD when the "Cavite dam" initiative is completed.

Fernandez said this is further complemented by the acquisition of 50 mobile tankers to complement the existing 50 of Manilad, and 30 additional static tankers to augment the existing 40, that will be situated "in the farthest and

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highest areas of the concession.

Manual Pangilinan, Maynilad chairman, said the concession currently gets 2,000 MLD of water from Angat out of the 2,400 MLD allocation as a result of the reduced water supply of 40 cubic meter per second (cms), down from the usual 46 cms.

This has resulted to 28 percent of Maynilad's customer base having no water connection for about 10 hours in a day.

Patrick Ty, MWSS chief regulator, said the agency has tapped Constantino and Partners to look at the books and records of Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. for the period of July 1, 2017 to Dec. 31, 2018.

Ty said the 2019 RFA started

yesterday November 6 with the detailed audit report expected to be released by the first quarter.

The MWSS-Regulatory Office said the RFA was previously done only every five years.

The body also warned the concessionaires that complaints about their schedule of water service interruptions may constitute a violation of their concession agreements and that they may be liable to appropriate penalties.

Ty said while the recent water shortages were caused by the dwindling supply from the Angat Dam, the water service interruption schedules are "within their control, and for which they may be held accountable." — *J. Macapagal and R. Castro*



Water firms told to avert supply crisis

By Jester P. Manalastas

A HOUSE leader warned the two water concessionaires of possible termination of contract if they fail to solve the crisis in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

At yesterday's hearing of the House Committee on Metro Manila Develop-

ment, chairman and Manila Rep. Manuel Lopez told the Manila Water Company (MWC) and Maynilad Water Services Inc. (MWSI) that they might lose their concession and their income if they fail to step up efforts in providing adequate water supply.

"Unfortunately, they have not lived up to their

commitment since they took over the water supply service in 1997," Lopez said.

Earlier reports said that there will be another crisis due to low supply of water.

Every year, the two companies are earning at least P6.1 billion for servicing water in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

MWC disclosed an annual income of P6.186 billion in 2016; P6.139 billion in 2017; and P6.635 billion in 2018.

MWSI has claimed an income of P6.17 billion; P6.8 billion in P2017 and P7.8 billion in 2018.

According to Lopez the Congress acknowledged the investment of the two companies, however they

should spend to ensure enough supply of water and avoid a crisis.

Lopez questioned the top executives of the two companies on precarious water supply faced by their customers despite the firms' enormous profits.

"Wala namang masama sa pagnegosyo. Ang masama po ay kung ang nagnegosyo ay nananamantala," Lopez said.

"We are also businessmen, one way or the other we understand you making money. But making enormous amount of money while there is water crisis occurring is not a nice thing to hear," he added.



WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION SA METRO HANGGANG 2020 PA – NWRB

MAAARING mag-papatuloy hanggang sa susunod na taon ang rotational water service interruptions na dinaranas ng mga residente ng Metro Manila dahil sa kawalan ng ulan na sasapat para malaman ulit ang Angat Dam, ayon sa National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

Sa pagdinig ng House Committee on Metro Manila Development, sinabi ni NWRB Executive Director Sevillo David, Jr. na kasaluku-

yang pinamamahalaan ng board ang alokasyon sa mga kabahayan sa Metro Manila upang mapreserba ang suplay mula sa Angat Dam hanggang sa umabot ang reservoir sa normal operating capacity nito.

Ayon kay David, ang water level sa dam ay kasalukuyang nasa 188.34 meters, o 8 meters lamang na mas mataas sa minimum normal operating level na 180 hanggang 200 meters.

"This time, sa tingin natin hindi siya sufficiently nakaka-

recover kaya gusto natin ma-manage 'yung supply natin sa ngayon in anticipation sa projection ng PAGASA na baka wala nasyadong pag-ulah na darating hanggang sa December," anyia.

"Mapapasabot naman natin hanggang summer next year ang tubig kaya lang kailangan talaga natin ma-manage 'yung supply. But probably po mag-papatuloy 'yung hindi normal na allocation for the water supply for Metro Manila." dagdag pa niya.

PMRT



Wastewater poses public health risks —US firm

IN THE Philippines, less than 10 percent of the population have access to piped sewerage systems and 80 percent of the water consumed or used, commonly referred to as "wastewater," drains out into the bodies of water.

Consequently, years of neglect, poor management, and unimproved sanitation facilities have resulted in serious threats to public health, as well as increased damage to our ecosystems and biodiversity.

Under the National Sewerage and Septage Management Program, about P200 million was made available as a subsidy for sewerage and septage projects that local government units can obtain for their sanitation program.

"However, wastewater treatment and septage management is generally known to be so expensive and needs a lot of manpower to handle and maintain such services," Eros Kaw, CEO of BioCleaner Inc., said in a press release.

"We at BioCleaner want to come in and offer our services to help address these problems, and hopefully the LGUs, by providing affordable and effective wastewater treatment and septage management at a very minimal cost," Eros added.

In addition to the initial capital expenditure, these facilities incur huge operating costs and human resource requirement.

Moreover, there are serious concerns over the hazardous nature of the wastewater management process that exposes the sanitation crew to health risks while sludge handling proved to be costly and can leave contaminants that poison the environment.

However, US-based biotech company BioCleaner puts forward the most practical answer to the country's sewerage and septage problem.

"We are confident that our system can effectively and efficiently deal wastewater treatment and septage management with minimal costs that is also proven to be super safe to both people and the environment," says Kaw.



Supporting a sustainable Sagada

New guidelines keep this

mountain destination clean

and green

Text and photos by KARA SANTOS

Sagada is a town in the Cordillera region within the Mountain Province. For years, it has attracted mostly backpackers and solo travelers who come to enjoy the cool mountain breeze, outdoor activities, natural scenery, and serenity. The long travel time by bus on winding rough roads coming from Manila kept away most of the tourist crowds.

But in recent years, Sagada has become more popular among families, barkadas, and regular office workers looking for a new destination. Better roads, the availability of budget-friendly van tours, and increased popularity of the place after it was featured in a movie has led to over-tourism, heavy traffic, waste problems, and more.

To minimize the impact of tourism, local officials crafted new guidelines which they released in December 2018. If you're visiting Sagada this holiday season, here are some things you need to keep in mind to help support their efforts to be a sustainable destination.

Ditch your vehicle for local transport

As a mountain town, Sagada has limited road networks and very narrow streets. The high volume of vehicles coming in especially during peak season like Christmas and Holy Week only add to the traffic and parking problems.

If you're planning to make a long drive up, you should know that new rules have been put in place regarding the use of private vehicles. All private and agency-owned/hired tourist vehicles are required to park through-

out the duration of their stay in their hotel parking area or in pay parking areas and use public transportation and walk to tourist destinations instead. Only local transport shall be allowed to ferry tourists to identified sites.

Sagada is mostly a walking town. In order to visit sites like Echo Valley and Sumaging Cave, you need to walk. No vehicles (including local shuttles) are allowed to ferry guests going to these sites. Parking is not allowed near the caves either.

Other sites including Bomod-ok, Marlboro, Balangagan, and Pongas can be visited with a local shuttle, which will make use of designated drop-off and loading areas. Visitors are prohibited from leaving cars idling or waiting on passengers for more than 10 minutes.

No parking is allowed along Sagada's major roads (including in front of restaurants) from 6 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. All tourists need to be prepared to walk around town to visit shops, restaurants, and nearby tourist spots. To avoid traffic congestion, tourists should ride the jeepneys.

Visit sites with accredited guides

Some areas like Kiltopan Peak had

to close for rehabilitation because of the "sea of crowds" and overnight campers who left trash behind and inadvertently started a fire. To prevent vandalism and destructive acts towards the environment, all tours must now be done with local tour guides.

Register at the tourism office to reserve slots for tours because a tourist capacity is now imposed on popular sites. For instance, viewing of the sunrise at Marlboro Hills will be closed once the capacity of 800 persons is reached.

Those who do not have a reservation stub will be accommodated the next day.

Respect local rules and culture

Tourists are asked to respect sacred grounds and sites in Sagada including minimizing noise. While popularized by the movie, shouting hugot quotes and screaming to the mountains are frowned upon by locals.

As a sign of courtesy, visitors should also ask permission before taking photos of rituals and individuals. Taking close photos of local rituals is also prohibited. To respect the local culture, visitors are also asked not to wear skimpy clothing in public spaces.

While there's no strict curfew in town, tourists are asked to minimize

their noise especially during night time. Restaurants close relatively early so you should inform your lodging house if you won't make it back by 10 p.m. lest you get locked out.



THE: Supporting a sustainable sagada

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DATE

New guidelines keep this mountain destination clean and green

Support local products

Businesses are managed by the community in Sagada. All the accommodations such as homestays, restaurants, cafes, and tours are run by the locals. The local government came up with initiatives to support this, preventing outsiders from opening establishments to prevent unfair competition from the homegrown options. Don't expect big name coffee joints or fast food chains here.

Make sure to support businesses by dining in the local cafes and restaurants.

Weaving provides an additional source of income for many locals, so be sure to pass by the Sagada Weaving Center, where you can buy vibrant and beautiful handwoven blankets, wallets, backpacks, and more.

Leave no trace

While it should go without saying in any destination, tourists should be mindful of the waste they produce while visiting Sagada.

Please do not leave any trash behind while visiting the forests, mountains, lakes, and caves. If there's no trash bin around, stash your trash and throw contents when you see a garbage bin in town or when you get back to your lodging house. Bring your own bag, preferably an eco-bag when shopping.

Because of the limited supply, tourists should also conserve water and minimize the use of plastic bottles. Bring your own water bottles that you can refill in water refilling stations.

Sagada is really making big efforts to transform itself into a sustainable tourist destination. As tourists, we can all do our part to help make this a reality.

A sign reminding tourists to go green



Tourists are encouraged to walk in Sagada



Serene mountain view of Sagada



The author admires the green scenery



CULLED HOGS REACH 70,000 AMID NEW SWINE FEVER OUTBREAKS

By Karl R. Ocampo
and DJ Yap
@Team_Inquirer

African swine fever (ASF) has spread to the cities of Caloocan and Malabon in Metro Manila even as the virus continues to infect more areas in locations earlier detected with the highly contagious hog disease, according to the Department of Agriculture.

In a second report it submitted on Monday to the Organization of Animal Health (OIE), the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) confirmed African swine fever outbreaks in two barangays in Caloocan and Malabon, as well as in 22 cities and municipalities in Pampanga and Bulacan provinces.

At a press briefing in Malacañang on Wednesday, Reildrin Morales, head of the secretariat of the agriculture department's Crisis Management Team on ASF, said that so far more than 70,000 hogs, or 0.55 **A7**

percent of the country's 12.7 million hog population, had been culled.

He said only about a third of the culled pigs had been infected with the African swine fever virus, since the policy of the government was to depopulate all farms with a confirmed case within a kilometer radius.

Lower rate

Morales said the rate of culling in the Philippines was still much lower than in countries like Vietnam with 600,000 pigs culled every month, and South Korea with about 140,000 every month.

Earlier cases were reported in the municipalities of Mapandan and Bayambang in Pangasinan, Rodriguez and Antipolo City in Rizal, and in seven barangays in Quezon City. The disease has also been reported in the provinces of Nueva Ecija and Cavite.

The outbreaks have prompted the Philippine Association of Meat Processors to stop buying local pork and instead import all its requirements.

Most of the fresh outbreaks were in 112 barangays of 13 towns and cities in Bulacan, according to the latest BAI report.

The towns are Balagtas, Baliuag, Bulakan, Bustos, Calumpit, Guiguinto, Hagonoy, Malolos, City, Pandi, Paombong, Plaridel, Pulilan and San Rafael—representing more than half of the 24 towns and cities in the province. The affected areas included major hog production sites.

Biggest supplier

Bulacan supplies 60 percent of Metro Manila's pork requirements, according to the website of the province.

The BAI also confirmed the presence of African swine fever in commercial farms in Balagtas, Baliuag, Malolos City and Pandi, although the agency's website said there were no registered hog farms in Balagtas, Baliuag and Malolos City, while there were 12 licensed hog farms in Pandi.

In Pampanga, the towns of Apalit, Bacolor, Candaba, Minalin, San Luis, and the cities of Angeles and San Fernando were found with hogs positive for the virus.

Pampanga and Bulacan recorded 20,000 hog deaths each.

There were also recorded cases of African swine fever in Barangay Deparo in Caloocan and Barangay Baritan in Malabon, according to the BAI.

Overall, a total of 166 barangays in four provinces and four cities in Luzon have confirmed cases of the hog disease,

a majority of which are in Bulacan and Pampanga.

Control and contain

Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura chair Rosendo So said barangay officials' lack of orientation on African swine fever had made it difficult for the industry to control and contain the spread of the disease.

The Department of Agriculture could not yet point to Chi-

na as the source of African swine fever in the Philippines despite last month's attempted smuggling of tainted pork products from that country, according to Morales.

Morales clarified reports quoting Agriculture Secretary William Dar as saying the cases in the Philippines might have originated from China.

"We cannot pinpoint the particular country because we do not know where the particular swill [infected with the virus] came from," he said.

Rodriguez landfill

Morales said the agriculture department had determined that the disease originated from the Rodriguez landfill in Rizal province sometime in late August, after hog raisers fed their pigs tainted swill believed to have come from hotels and restaurants.

On Oct. 28, customs authorities seized at least P3.5 million worth of pork and other meat products misdeclared as tomato paste and vermicelli. The shipment arrived on Oct. 12.

"What Secretary Dar was saying was that the shipment from China tested positive [for the virus]," Morales said.

China shipment positive

But since the disease was discovered earlier in August, "it's possible there were smuggled goods prior to the discovery of ASF in the country with similar shipments of tainted goods," he added.

Morales said the Philippine hog raising industry had incurred about P3 billion in losses due to the spread of the virus since August, based on a "straightforward computation" of projected losses.

"For example, there are about 3,000 pigs that are left unsold every day in the National Capital Region and adjacent areas like Bulacan and Pampanga ... and the value of each pig is P10,000," he said. "That's P30 million in losses per day. So in a month, hog raisers are losing P900 million, or almost a billion pesos."

—WITH REPORTS FROM CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE AND TONETTE OREJAS INQ



11,258 scientists worldwide declare 'climate emergency'

WASHINGTON — In a move that backs a term used to date mainly by climate activists and left-leaning politicians, a new study by 11,258 scientists in 153 countries from a broad range of disciplines warns that the planet "clearly and unequivocally faces a climate emergency," and provides six broad policy goals that must be met to address it, according to a report in the *Washington Post*.

The study, published on Tuesday in the journal *BioScience*, was spearheaded by ecologists Bill Ripple and Christopher Wolf of Oregon State University, along with William Moomaw, a Tufts University climate scientist, and researchers in Australia and South Africa.

"The report is a stark departure

from recent scientific assessments of global warming, such as those of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in that it does not couch its conclusions in the wishy-washy language of uncertainties, and it does prescribe policies," according to the *Washington Post*, quoting *BioScience*.

The study, called the "World scientists' warning of a climate emergency," marks the first time a large group of scientists has formally come out in favor of labeling climate change an "emergency," which the study notes is caused by many human trends that are together increasing greenhouse gas emissions, the *Washington Post* said.

"The paper clearly lays out the huge challenge of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases," it said.

"Despite 40 years of global climate negotiations, with few exceptions, we have generally conducted business as usual and have largely failed to address this predicament," the study stated.

"The paper bases its conclusions on a set of easy-to-understand indicators that show the human influence on climate, such as 40 years of greenhouse gas emissions, economic trends, population growth rates, per capita meat production, and global tree cover loss, as well as consequences, such as global temperature trends and ocean heat content," the *Washington Post* said.

The results are charts that are, at least compared with the climate graphics presented by the IPCC, surprisingly simple, and that help reveal the troubling direction the world is headed.



Actress Jane Fonda participates in a climate rally outside the US Capitol in Washington last week.

AFF



11,000 scientists declare climate emergency

WASHINGTON (Xinhua) – A global team of over 11,000 scientists from more than 150 countries have declared a climate emergency and warned the catastrophic threat if humanity failed to address the climate crisis.

The rallying cry came after the United States formally began the process of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on Monday, making it the only nation among nearly 200 signatories that abandoned this global agenda on combating climate change.

In a paper published on Tuesday in *BioScience*, a journal of the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the massive alliance of scientists warned that "untold human suffering" is unavoidable without deep and lasting shifts in human activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and other factors related to climate change.

"Climate change has arrived and is accelerating faster than many scientists expected," said the paper's co-author William Ripple with Oregon State University.

The scientists provided a set of mitigating actions in areas of energy, food, short-lived pollutants, nature, economy and population.

They suggested replacing fossil fuels with low-carbon renewables and eliminating subsidies to fossil fuel companies. Emissions of methane, soot and other short-lived climate pollutants should be swiftly cut.

They also urged to convert the economy to one that is carbon free to address human dependence on the biosphere and to stabilize a global human population that is increasing by more than 200,000 people a day.

Contrary to scientists' proposals, the Trump administration rolled

back environmental rules made in the Obama era to prop up the coal industry by allowing it to emit more greenhouse gases into the air.

In August, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to abandon federal regulations that require the oil and gas industry to install technology that monitors and curbs methane leaks in wells, pipelines and other operational facilities.

The EPA finalized a rule in June to overturn the Obama-era attempt to restrict emissions from coal plants by relying more on cleaner fuels.

Trump once called climate change a "hoax" and his administration considered efforts to fight global warming just to "be a waste of your money," a position met with widespread criticism both at home and abroad.

"Global surface temperature, ocean heat content, extreme weath-

er and its costs; sea level, ocean acidity, and area burned in the United States are all rising," said Ripple.

July this year was the hottest month on Earth in the 140-year record. It was "almost entirely due to climate change" without a strong El Niño being present, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

A study published on Monday in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* showed that sea levels will continue to rise around the world long after current carbon emissions pledges made through the Paris climate agreement are met and global temperatures stabilize.

The researchers from Oregon State University found that emissions released during the initial 15-year period of the agreement would cause sea levels to rise by about 20 centimeters by the year 2300.



ACB, SEARCA continue collaboration on biodiversity

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) have renewed their partnership in integrating and mainstreaming biodiversity into agriculture.

ACB executive director Theresa Mundita Lim said the partnership is being continued to further their efforts in mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture in the region.

"Mainstreaming is important because of the inextricable connection between agriculture and biodiversity. Together, our organizations can work to strike the balance between the two," she said.

The ACB chief said agrobiodiversity— the variety and variability of animals, plants, and micro-organisms that are used directly or

indirectly for food and agriculture— can help address the world's growing food demand and safeguard the region's biodiversity.

For his part, SEARCA director Glenn Gregorio said the two organizations have the right ingredients for a long and fruitful partnership.

Signed by Lim and Gregorio, the second Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a continuation of the collaboration in pursuing shared objectives of promoting sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation.

Under the new MoU, ACB and SEARCA will jointly undertake projects and activities covering thematic areas on agriculture and biodiversity, along with capacity enhancement activities and information exchange and awareness campaigns.

Maria Romero



TITLE:

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Coca-Cola, Palawan town ink pact

SAN VICENTE, Palawan—The Coca-Cola System in the Philippines, as represented by Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines Inc., the licensed bottler of Coca-Cola products in the country, and the Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines are turning over the top-of-the-line Barber Surf Rake beach-cleaning equipment to the municipal government here.

With the grant, the town, led by Mayor Amy Roa Alvarez, would ensure responsible environmental conservation of San Vicente's top tourist attraction—an approximately 15-kilometer-long stretch of fine white sand beach that rivals the best beaches in the world.

"San Vicente has been rightly drawing tourists from across the Philippines and across the globe for its sights and for

the warmth of its people," said Cecile Alcantara, president of the Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines.

"We at Coca-Cola want to contribute to the health of its tourism sector, by helping institutionalize ecological stewardship and environmental protection to better ensure that San Vicente can sustainably maintain the beauty of its resources and attractions for generations to come," she added.

Coca-Cola signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the municipal government last October to formalize its partnership toward championing sustainability here. The ceremony was witnessed by Miss Earth 2019 candidates, who share the same goals of environmental protection.

Officials of San Vicente, Palawan, led by Mayor Amy Roa Alvarez (second from right) and Coca-Cola representatives sign the agreement to turn-over the Barber Surf Rake machine to the municipal government.





TITLE:

ISA sa napakalaking problema ng mahal kong Pinas ang napakasmang kalagayan sa ilegal na droga.

Simula noong 2016 na pag-upo ni Vice President Leni Robredo, nagsimula na ang giyera na pinasimulan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Lumitaw ang mga mala-demonyong mukha ng ilegal na droga gaya ng pagkakaroon ng nasa tatlong milyong adik, tulak, druglord, protector, ninja cop at iba pa.

Ang mga sangkot sa drogang ito ang pinagmumulan ng nasa 70 porsyento ng lahat ng krimen noong una.

Hindi lang sa street crime nakikita ang napakasamang epekto ng droga kundi sa mismong gobyerno na roon matatagpuan ang mga narco-politician na protektado ng mga mataas na opisyal, lalo na ang pulisya.

DAYUHANG DRUGLORD

Naging klaro ring malaki ang kaugnayan ng mga dayuhang druglord o drug dealer sa paglaganap ng droga sa Pinas hanggang sa naging klaro na lunsaran ang Pinas ng droga patungo rin sa ibang bansa gaya ng sunod-sunod na pagkakahuli ng mga Pinoy na mule patungo sa ibang bansa.

Ang nakapanggigigil, nakakulong nga ang ilang druglord, dayuhan at Pinoy, na nadatnan ng administrasyong Duterte, nadiskubren ang mga itong mga sangkot sa droga sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa.

Siyempre pa, may kasabwat ang mga ito na nasa labas ng Bilibid at labas ng bansa at nakakayanan pa nilang korapin ang mga nasa pamahalaan, gaya ng mga nasa Bureau of Customs na napalulusutan ng bilyon-bilyong halaga ng shabu.

DAPAT MAY NATUTUNAN NA

Bise Presidente si Atty. Robredo simula't sapul at naging kwestionable lang ang kanyang posisyon dahil sa protesta ni Bongbong Marcos.

Pero VP pa rin siya sa gitna ng panahon ng pagdedesiyon ng Supreme Court sa protesta ni Marcos.

Walang nakaaalam ng kahihinatnan ng nahahalal na Pangulo na katulad ni Pang. Digong.



ULTIMATUM

NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

VP LENI, SA 3 TAONG GIYERA DAPAT MAY NATUTUNAN NA

Maaaring mag-resign ang Panguio, mawalan ng kakayahan na mamuno, ma-impeach o kaya ay kunin ni Lord nang hindi makatapos ng termino.

Dahil siya pa ang VP ngayon, walang ibang papalit kay Pang. Digong kundi si VP Robredo bilang takda ng Saligang Batas sa presidential succession.

Pero nakapagtata-kang sinasabi ng marami niyang kaalyado na wala siyang karanasan at kalamayan sa giyera sa droga kaya hindi ito handa na humarap nang tahasan sa problema.

Malinaw ito sa pananaw ni Congressman Egay Erice na isang berteranong kritiko ni Pang. Digong at kakampi ni Robredo.

TINANGGAP ANG HAMON

Ngayon ay tinanggap ni VP Leni ang hamon ng pagiging isang mataas na pinuno sa pagsusunod ng giyera sa droga.

Kahit sinasabi ng ilan niyang kaalyado na hindi siya kwalipikado, magandang tuntungan niya ito para labanan ang droga na hindi maitatangi ng kahit sino na malaking problema ng bansa.

Pagkakataon niyang maramdaman nang malaliman at malawakan ang problema na magtutulak sa kanya kung ano ang gagawin niya kung tuluyang mawala na sa pwesto si Pang. Digong.

Hindi niya dapat inisip na isang patibong tungo sa kapalpakan ang hamon na sumali siya sa giyera sa droga.

Bilang VP at mikaupo na ng mahigit tatlong taon, dapat may handa na siyang malinaw na gagawin laban sa droga.

Malaking bagay rin na pupwede siyang mawagan o mag-utos sa iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan para samahan siya sa giyera sa iba't ibang anyo.

Pero nakapagtata-kang sinasabi ng kanyang kampo na walang matibay na batayan ng pagpupwesto sa kanya at naririyang ang pagdududa na magampanan niya

ang kanyang trabaho nang tama at maayos.

NAPAWALAN NIYA ANG PAGKAKATAON

Isang palatandaan ng epekto ng giyera sa droga ni Pang. Digong ang pagka-zero sa halalan nitong 2019 ng lahat ng kandidato ni VP Leni sa pagkasenador at pagkakahalal lamang ng ilan nilang kongresista.

Malinaw na nakaugat ang kampanya laban sa mga kandidato ni Pang. Digong sa Senado ang kanilang "kademonyohan" umano sa giyera sa droga.

Pero kumapit ang mga mamamayan sa tagumpay laban sa droga ni Pang. Digong.

Kung lubos na sasali si VP Leni sa giyera sa droga, baka mabuhay niya ang kanyang pangarap na maging gaganap na Pangulo sa sunod na halalan at makamit nito ang kabaligtaran ng zero vote sa Otso Diretso.

Baka kung ano ang ipinakita ng higit na nakarami sa nasa 50 milyong botante sa nakaraang halalan, baka maani ni VP ang respeto at pagtitiwala ng mga mamamayan bilang kwalipikadong pinuno ng bansa.

Sabi nga ni Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo, malawak na daan tungo sa pagka-Pangulo ang epektibong giyera sa droga.

Walang puwang ang rasong walang kaalaman at karanasan ang isang VP sa isang mahalagang usapin ng lipunan kaya hindi dapat ito sumali sa laban sa giyera.

Ang nagnanais na maging Panguio ng bansa ay dapat handang sumuong kahit sa anomang bagay na sumisira sa lipunang Filipino, may kaalaman o karanasan man siya.

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo, maaaring iparating sa 0922840-3333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com.