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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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'Estero rangers' given 6 weeks to clean up MM creeks

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

"Estero rangers" have six weeks to help improve the condition of Metro Manila's creeks and tributaries, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said yesterday.

The 1,000 *estero* rangers have until Dec. 31 to "bring about change" in the estuaries and 700 barangays assigned to them, he said.

"You are the chosen ones, recommended by your respective local government units. You were trusted not only to clean the trash in the estuaries, but also to prohibit people from throwing trash in these areas," Cimatu told the *estero* rangers.

He said the *estero* rangers would serve as the "communication link" between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the community in relation to the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"We want the communication links to be in the exact place where people dump their waste," Cimatu pointed out.

The DENR chief said he expects the *estero* rangers to "bring about cultural

change among those who live along *esteros*."

"The next generation will see better rivers and a better Manila Bay," he said.

The DENR identified 279 waterways traversing 711 barangays in Metro Manila, where there are alleys not reached by garbage trucks. These alleys are mostly populated by informal settler families.

The agency said that two *estero* rangers will be initially deployed to each barangay, or a total of 1,422.

So far, 1,283 have signed contracts with the DENR and 1,142 of them attended the mass oath-taking and deployment ceremonies held at the Niñoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City on Friday.

The employment contract of each *estero* ranger runs from Nov. 15 to Dec. 31, after which the contract may be renewed every month.

Under the contract, an *estero* ranger gets a monthly salary of P8,500 on a five-day workweek schedule. A ranger is tasked to clean trash traps in *esteros*, prevent indiscriminate dumping of garbage and remind people about proper waste disposal.


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DENR deploying 1,422 estero rangers to over 700 barangays

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is hoping to see improvements in the condition and quality of Metro Manila's creeks and tributaries by the end of the year with the deployment of over 1,000 estero rangers to 711 barangays. ► **9**

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu instructed the estero rangers to "bring about change" in the next six weeks.

"You are the chosen few who were trusted not only to clean the trash in the estuaries, but also to prohibit people from throwing trash in these areas," Cimatu said during the mass oath-taking and deployment ceremonies last Friday.

The DENR chief said the estero rangers would serve as the communication link between the agency and the community in connection with the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay. Cimatu expects the estero rangers to "bring about cultural change among those who live along esteros."

DENR has identified 279 waterways traversing the 711 barangays in Metro Manila, where

there are alleys not reached by garbage trucks. These alleys are mostly populated by informal settler families. The agency said two estero rangers will be initially deployed to each barangay or a total of 1,422.

So far, 1,283 have been signed up and 1,142 of them attended the mass oath-taking and deployment ceremonies.

The employment contract of each estero ranger runs from November 15 to December 31 this year. After which, the contract may be renewed every month.

Under the contract, an estero ranger gets a monthly salary of ₱8,500 on a five-day workweek schedule.

A ranger is tasked to clean trash traps in esteros, prevent indiscriminate dumping of garbage, and remind people about proper waste disposal.



Six weeks to improve MM creeks

Cimatu gave the more than 1,000 "Estero Rangers" until the end of December this year to "bring about change" in the estuaries assigned to them

By Marla Romero
@tribunephil_mbr

Improvements in the physical condition and water quality of Metro Manila's creeks and tributaries are expected to be seen in the next six weeks following the deployment of the so-called "Estero Rangers" to over 700 barangays in the megacity

This was reiterated by Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu during their mass oath-taking and deployment ceremonies held at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City on Friday.

Cimatu gave the more than 1,000 "Estero Rangers" until the end of December this year to "bring about change" in the estuaries assigned to them.

"You are the chosen ones, recommended by your respective local government units.

You are the chosen few who were trusted not only to clean the trash in the estuaries, but also to prohibit people from throwing trash in these areas," Cimatu told the rangers.

The environment chief also described their role as "swift, silent but producing tangible results."

Cimatu said the "Estero Rangers" would serve as the "communication link" between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the community about the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"We want the communication links to be in the exact place where people dump their waste," Cimatu pointed out.

He said he expects them to "bring about cultural change among those who live along esteros."

"The next generation will see better rivers and a better Manila Bay," he added.

The DENR had identified 279 waterways

traversing 711 barangays in Metro Manila, where there are alleys not reached by garbage trucks. These alleys are mostly populated by informal settler families.

The agency said two "Estero Rangers" will be initially deployed to each barangay, or a total of 1,422 in Metro Manila.

So far, 1,283 have been signed up and 1,142 of them attended the mass oath-taking and deployment ceremonies.

The employment contract of each "Estero Ranger" runs from 15 November to 31 December this year. After this, the contract may be renewed every month.

Under the contract, an estero ranger is tasked to clean trash traps in esteros, prevent indiscriminate dumping of garbage, and remind people about proper waste disposal. They shall have a monthly salary of P8,500 on a five-day workweek schedule.



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DENR deploys 1,000 estero rangers

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is hoping to see improvements in the condition and quality of creeks and tributaries in the National Capital Region by the end of the year with the deployment of "estero" rangers in over 700 barangays in Metro Manila.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu has instructed at least 1,000 estero rangers to "bring about change" in the next six weeks.

"You are the chosen few who were trusted not only to clean the trash in the estuaries, but also to prohibit people from throwing trash in these areas," Cimatu said during the mass oath taking and deployment ceremonies last Friday.

The DENR chief said the estero rangers would serve as the "communication link" between the agency and the community in connection with the ongoing

rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

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ceremonies.

The employment contract of each estero ranger runs from Nov. 15 to Dec. 31 this year. After which, the contract may be renewed every month. **(Ellalyn Ruiz)**



Proper disposal of e-waste needed

Under the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, e-waste is required to be separated from domestic waste or the refuse generated by a household

Through the years, many of us have accumulated broken or discarded electrical and electronic equipment that is considered to be a form of waste. While these may be discarded just like garbage or sold to junk shops for parts, there is a sensible way of disposing these items.

To promote the environmentally sound management of broken or discarded equipment, Barangay West Triangle in Quezon City yesterday held an e-waste collection event in collaboration with the national environmental authorities.

The collection was carried out under the auspices of the "Safe PCB and E-Waste Management Project" led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau and funded by the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Among the items collected were unwanted TV sets with plastic casings and cathode ray tubes, computers, laptops, appliances and assorted e-gadgets such as cell phones and tablets.

"We have embarked on this timely activity to assist our constituents in managing their e-wastes in a way that will not pollute our surroundings and endanger people's health," said Elmer Timothy Ligon, chairman of Barangay West Triangle.

"This effort hopes to instill among our residents that we could not simply throw e-waste in regular trash bins because of the many hazardous chemicals they contain," he said.

"In line with Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, and the Quezon City Environment Code, e-waste is required to be separated from domestic waste or the refuse generated by a household," he explained.

After documenting the items received, the e-waste collected will be sent to the Integrated Recycling Industries Inc., a government-accredited facility, in Laguna for proper management.

According to the "Safe PCB and E-Waste Management Project" website, "e-waste, also referred to as waste electrical and electronic equipment, if improperly managed, such as through improper dismantling, burning or disposal can result in the release of harmful chemicals into the environment, among which is polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE)."

"Once in the environment, PBDE can enter the body of living things by way of inhalation of contaminated air or by ingestion of contaminated food, such as fish," it explained.



QC bgy gets rid of e-waste

QUEZON City's Barangay West Triangle yesterday conducted an e-waste collection event teaming up with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and environment watchdog Eco-Waste Coalition in collaboration with other national environmental authorities.

According to Barangay chairman Elmer Timothy Ligon, the event was to promote an environmentally sound management of broken or discarded electrical and electronic equipment.

The e-waste collection event was carried out under the auspices of the "Safe PCB and E-Waste Management Project" led by DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

It was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Among the items collected were unwanted TV sets with plastic casings and cathode ray tubes (CRTs), computers, laptops, appliances and assorted e-gad-

gets such as cellphones and tablets brought by community residents.

"We have embarked on this timely activity to assist our constituents in managing their e-wastes in a way that will not pollute our surroundings and endanger people's health," Ligon said.

The effort was being undertaken with assistance from the DENR-EMB and the EcoWaste Coalition to instill discipline among residents that e-wastes could not just be thrown out in regular trash bins because of the many hazardous chemical they contain.

"In line with Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, and the Quezon City Environment Code, e-waste is required to be separated from domestic waste or the refuse generated by a household," explained Ka Timmy as he is fondly called.

After documenting the items received, the e-waste collected will be sent to the Integrated Recycling Industries, Inc., a government-accredited facility in Laguna, for proper management. **Joel dela Torre**



Gov't acts on plastic pollution problem

The Philippine government is moving to take official action on the worldwide problem of plastic pollution.

At the cabinet meeting last week, President Duterte cited the problem of plastic garbage being dumped in the world's oceans, there to accumulate and remain unchanged for the next 450 years, posing a danger to whales and other sea life. The Philippines, according to one study, is the world's third worst plastic polluter, after China and Indonesia, although the plastic wastes are largely from the packaging of Western medicine, soft drinks, and beauty products.

The President said he is considering a nationwide plastic ban in response to the growing international environmental movement, but he said he believes it should be enacted by Congress. He thus plans to certify as urgent a bill banning single-use plastics such as soft-drinks straws, stirrers, cups, cutlery, sachets for pills and other medicine, and wrappers for food items.

There are already two bills banning single-use plastics in the Senate filed by Senators Francis Pangilinan and Cynthia Villar. In the House, Rep.

Elpidio Barzaga Jr. has filed a bill banning single-use plastics in all tourist sites and destinations.

According to the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Filipinos use nearly 57 million shopping bags daily, or about 20.6 billion a year, and 16.5 billion smaller and thinner plastic containers and 60 billion sachets annually. These are thrown away right after use, adding to the growing mountains of plastics in our landfills and in the seas around us.

In response to the growing worldwide movement against plastic wastes, the world's biggest users of plastic packaging for their grocery, medicine, softdrinks, and beauty products – have taken stock of their operations and resolved to phase out single-use plastics by the year 2025. This is the private sector responding to the problem.

The Philippine government will now do its part, with President Duterte calling for action and Congress enacting laws needed to carry out the program. Hopefully, the whole world will similarly respond to the problem and ban the use of non-degradable plastics, while the world's scientists continue research on plastics that will not cause the problem of pollution that is facing us today.



EDITORIAL

Aksiyon ng pamahalaan sa problema ng polusyon sa plastic

PATULOY ang hakbang ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas upang gumawa ng aksiyon sa pandaigdigang problema ng polusyon sa plastic.

Sa pulong ng gabinete nitong nakaraang linggo, nabanggit ni Pangulong Duterte ang problema sa basurang plastic na natatambak sa karagatan ng mundo, na patuloy na dumarami at mananatili sa susunod na 450 taon, na nagbibigay banta sa mga balyena at iba pang buhay ng mga lamang-dagat. Ang Pilipinas, ayon sa isang pag-aaral, ang ikatlong pinakamalaking polluter ng plastic sa buong mundo, na sumusunod sa China at Indonesia, bagamat karamihan sa mga basurang plastic ang nagmumula sa mga pakete ng gamot, mga soft drinks at produktong pampaganda.

Sinabi ng Pangulo, na ikinokonsidera niya ang pagpapatupad ng nationwide plastic ban bilang tugon sa lumalagong kampanya ng mundo para sa kalikasan, bagamat naniniwala, aniya, ito na dapat itong pagtibayin ng Kongreso. Kaya naman plano niyang sertipikahan bilang 'urgent' ang isang panukalang-batas na nagbabawal sa mga single-use plastics tulad ng soft-drinks straw, stirrer, cup, at mga pakete ng pills at iba pang gamot, gayundin ang mga pambalot para sa mga pagkain.

Mayroon nang dalawang panukala na nagbabawal sa paggamit ng mga single-use plastics sa Senado na inihain ni Senators Francis Pangilinan at Cynthia Villar. Sa Kamara, naghain na rin si Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. ng isang panukala na nagbabawal sa mga single-use plastics sa lahat ng mga tourist sites at destination sa bansa.

Ayon sa Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, gumagamit ang mga Pilipino ng halos 57 milyong shopping bags kada araw, o nasa 20.6 bilyon bawat taon, at 16.5 bilyong mas maliit at maninipis na mga plastic container at nasa 60 bilyon pakete kada taon. Ang mga ito ay itinatapon agad matapos gamitin, na nadaragdag sa gabundok na basurang plastic sa ating mga landfills at sa mga dagat sa palibot natin.

Bilang tugon sa lumalagong pandaigdigang kampanya laban sa mga plastic, nagdesisyon ang pinakamalaking gumagamit ng mga plastic packaging para sa kanilang mga grocery, gamit, softdrinks at beauty products - na bawasan na ang kanilang operasyon at iresolba ang problema sa phase-out ng mga single-use plastics pagsapit ng 2025. Ito ang isang pribadong sektor na tumutugon sa problema.

Ngayon, gagawin na rin ng pamahalaan ng Pilipinas ang bahagi nito, sa panawagan ni Pangulong Duterte para sa aksiyon at sa pagpapatupad ng Kongreso ng isang batas na siyang mapapatupad ng programa. Nawa, tutugon din ang iba pang mga bansa hinggil sa problema at ipagbabawal na ang paggamit ng mga 'di nabunulok na plastic, habang magpapatuloy ang pananaliksik sa mga siyentista hinggil sa plastic na hindi magdudulot ng problema sa polusyon, tulad ng kiraharap natin sa kasalukuyan.



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64.6% DEGRADED IN 24 MONTHS

IN MAJOR GREEN THRUST, SMC TO SHIFT TO BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC PACKAGING

By **Daxim L. Lucas**
@daxINQ

San Miguel Corp. (SMC)—the country's largest conglomerate—is set to become the first Filipino company to utilize fully certified biodegradable plastic packaging.

The company, which is also Southeast Asia's largest food processor, said it was tapping a local firm that has been developing and testing the technology in the last five years. SMC will initially use this for food and nonfood products, such as cement and feed sacks, grocery bags and food and other single-use plastic packaging.

The move will be the newest addition to SMC's sustainable business models, which include the zero-waste returnable glass bottle system and manufacturing processes following circular economy principles—where byproducts are reused to create other products.

For this undertaking, SMC president Ramon Ang said the firm would partner with Philippine Bioresins Corp.—a small but innovative company that had successfully developed and tested biodegradable plastics.

"Initially, we will use it for cement packaging," he said. "What we will use is a biodegradable plastic woven packaging, or sack. This is proudly developed by Filipino inventors, using local materials, and made by local workers."

Philippine Bioresins Corp. was recently given an Environmental Technology Verification certificate by the Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) Industrial Technology Development Institute.

The DOST verification con-

firmed that the biodegradable polypropylene produced by the company would be 64.6-percent degraded in 24 months as compared to nonbiodegradable plastics (4.5 percent in 24 months).

"We have always been looking for innovative environmental technologies, and we are excited about this development," Ang said. "We are looking forward to using biodegradable plastics, and this is just the beginning, as they are developing other technologies in this field."

The SMC chief said the country's stature as the world's third-largest plastic polluter to global waters should be enough motivation for people and companies to try and find ways how to lessen their impact on the environment.

In addition to using biodegradable cement bags, the company's cement business also buys plastic water bottles and bags for use as fuels for its cement plants. It also uses discarded rubber tires and industrial sewage waste as secondary fuel for its cement plants.

"This is another way that we are helping turn plastic wastes that would have otherwise ended up in landfills or bodies of water, into useful and much-needed products—in this case, cement, which is used to construct buildings and infrastructure," he explained.

"We are very serious when it comes to sustainability," Ang added. "We have stopped our plastic bottled water business; we have taken on the challenge to reduce group-wide nonproduct water use by 50 percent by 2025, and we've poured more resources into major projects to clean up bodies of water as well as into research that supports plastic waste reduction." INQ



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Waste-to-energy facilities to be built

Three waste-to-energy facilities worth \$230 million will be fully operational by 2022 in Pangasinan and Cebu to benefit the two provinces' power consumers.

According to Integrated Green Technology (IGT) president and chief executive officer Michael Jimenez, construction of the facilities will begin within the first quarter of 2020 and are targeted to be completed in two years depending on the contractors and weather conditions.

He added that the technology will be provided by Paris-based CNIM Martin Private Ltd., which has a proven track record in building more than 170

waste-to-energy facilities in 23 countries, and assured that the power source will be sustainable.

The expected volume of trash to be collected is about 480 tons per day with 50 tons expected to produce about 1 megawatt for the Cebu plants, but Jimenez said the capacity that the facilities will produce would not be fully sold to the power grid.

"For Cebu, at 480 (tons), we can generate about 12 megawatts but the volume we can sell to the grid is only about 8 to 9 megawatts because we're going to use it for our own plants," he explained.

Proper waste segregation is still a continuing problem for some areas

despite the implementation of Republic Act 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Program, however, Jimenez noted this will not be a problem for them as they would still mix the trash for processing.

"We'll follow the law but we (will) do our own thing for how we are going to process it," he said.

Jimenez added that they are just waiting for feedback before presenting a proposal to the local governments of Quezon City, Pasig City and Manila as he pointed out that the National Capital Region should have about three waste-to-energy facilities to be able to support its requirements. **TIO**



E-waste drive Broken and discarded electronic appliances are being collected in an e-waste collection drive for proper environmental disposal in Quezon City.



'Department of Water' potentially a good idea

THE creation of a single agency to oversee the management of water utilities in the country is obviously a popular idea in Congress, as 35 separate bills that would create a Department of Water Resources (DWR) have been filed. The idea took a positive step toward realization this past week when two House committees sitting as a joint panel approved a bill consolidating the separate measures.

The bill approved by the House Committees on Government Reorganization and Public Works and Highways would cut the number of agencies dealing with water matters to just two: the DWR and the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), which would continue in its current form. Ten other agencies would either be transferred to the new department or have their functions absorbed by it. These are the River Basin Control Office; the Manila Bay Coordinating Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); the Flood Management Planning and Sediment Functions of the Department of Public Works and Highways; the Water Supply Sanitation Unit of the Department of the Interior and Local Government; the Water Quality Management Section of the Environmental Management Bureau of the DENR; the Metro Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS); the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA); the Laguna Lake Development Authority; the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, which has been abolished by order of President Rodrigo Duterte, regardless of the proposed department; and the National Irrigation Administration.



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According to the consolidated measure, the proposed DWR will be the primary national agency responsible for the comprehensive and integrated planning, policy formulation and management of water resources in the Philippines, and will work with the NWRB to establish a National Framework for Water Resource Management.

The nature of Philippine legislation being what it is, that triumphal description could mean anything, but even without key details that will not emerge (and probably have not even been considered yet) until much later, there are a couple of things about the DWR proposal that are encouraging. The first and perhaps the most practical one is the simple streamlining of management the new department represents. Philippine governing style has always favored inefficiency, creating an endless number of discrete agencies to handle similar activities, multiplying budgets and creating essentially unnecessary, overlapping jobs. Cutting the chaff, or minimally, at least gathering it all in one place will help to cut down expenses and speed up the glacial pace of government action.

The proposed DWR may also help to improve the regulation of privatized water infrastructure, since resources can be shared and indirect impacts can be quickly identified. Part of the reason water concessionaires like Maynilad and Manila Water have been able to basically run amok among

their captive markets for so long is the inherent weakness in the regulatory structure. They are answerable to one agency, the MWSS or LWUA, as the case may be, which in turn has essentially one practical function, the supply of bulk water. With the formation of the DWR, some of the regulatory cracks water concessionaires have become adept at slipping through conceivably will be filled, which will benefit their long-suffering customers.

Of course, much of this is speculative at this point. The measure creating the DWR still needs to pass muster in the House of Representatives and Senate, and assuming that happens anytime soon, what would follow is a lengthy process of developing the actual details of the creating legislation through the implementing rules and regulations, where, as we all know, the result might be something very different than what was originally proposed.

Even so, the proposal to create a DWR is a promising development, and could greatly improve the management and sustainability of this vital infrastructure. The progress of the idea deserves careful observation.

I'd like to take a moment to share a little personal update, and in doing so make a shameless plug. Over the past several weeks I have become heavily involved in producing content for The Manila Times TV. It has been a personal wish of mine for some time to move into television and digital programming — though aging and rather set in my ways, even I can recognize the wave of the future when I see it — and so the opportunity to do so has been a reward and a blessing, even if it has been exhausting. As the old advertising line goes, watch this space; over the next weeks and months we will be introducing more exciting new programming to our audience, a fair amount of it graced by yours truly. As always, comments and suggestions are always welcome, so feel free to sound off on things you would like to see, either in print or en vivo.



Paglikha ng Dept of Water Resources umarangkada

INAPRUBAHAN sa joint hearing ng Kamara de Representantes ang panukalang pagtatayo ng Department of Water Resources na hiniling ni Pangulong Duterte sa Kongreso.

Sa pagdinig ng House committees on Government Reorganization at on Public Works and Highways, inaprubahan ang panukala na siyang mangunguna sa pagtiyak na mayroong sapat na suplay ng tubig ang bansa.

Ayon kay Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, lider ng technical working group, 35 na panukala ang kanilang pinagsama-sama upang mabuo ang substitute bill para sa pagpapatupad ng Water Code of the Philippines at Code of Sanitation of the Philippines.

Ang National Water Resources Board ang magiging core organization sa hubuun na departamento na pamumunuan ng isang kalihim at limang undersecretary.

Ililipat sa DWR ang trabaho ng River Basin Control Office, Manila Bay Coordinating Office ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, flood management planning and sediment functions ng Department of Public Works and Highways, water and supply and sanitation unit ng Department of the Interior and Local Government, at Water and Quality Management Section ng Environmental Management.

Magiging attached agency naman ng DWR ang Metro Manila Waterworks Sewerage System, Local Water Utilities Administration, Laguna Lake Development Authority, Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission at National Irrigation Administration. — *Leif-billy Begas*



Tubig sa Angat Dam nabawasan

BAHAGYANG nabawasan ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam kahapon.

Ayon sa Pagasa Hydrology Division, alas-6 ng umaga ay bumaba sa 188.07 metro ang lebel ng tubig sa dam.

Nabawasan din ang tubig sa Ipo Dam na nasa 100.61 metro habang napanatili ang water level sa La Mesa Dam sa 77.54 metro.

Maliban dito, kumonti rin ang tubig sa Ambuklao at Magat dams.

Samantala, nadagdagan naman ang tubig sa Binga, San Roque, Pantabangan at Caliraya dams.

— *Radyo Inquirer*



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CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN ACTIVITY RUB SALT INTO VENICE'S WOUNDS

ROME—Warming seas and excavations within the Venice lagoon mean the exceptionally high flood waters in the city this week are also saltier, posing an extra threat to its architectural treasures.

When the water recedes from the cobbled lanes, marbled palaces and ancient churches of a city that rose up out of marshes 15 centuries ago, it leaves salt crystals which slowly corrode the brickwork and will eventually eat it away.

Worst in 50 years

"With the salt water, everything becomes more difficult for us," Mayor Luigi Brugnaro said on Friday as a fresh inundation left 70 percent of Venice submerged just three days after it suffered the worst floods in more than 50 years.

The lagoon has always held a mixture of water from rivers which feed it and that which enters via openings to the sea.

Rising sea levels brought about by climate change and the digging of new canals and other structures mean more salt water is coming in from the Adriatic.

In the 1960s, a canal was dug in the lagoon for oil tankers to reach the petrochemical plant of Marghera, a port less than 5 kilometers from the old center of Venice.

More recently, moon-shaped piers built to protect the gaps of the Venice lagoon were reckoned by the scientists of the National Center for Research to have created big depressions in the sea bed, which would also allow more sea water in.

"The excavations of canals, in particular the one dedicated to oil tankers, have opened highways to the sea," said Gianfranco Bettin, former deputy mayor of Venice and leader of the Greens in the Veneto region.

"Global warming has contributed by increasing the sea level and the strength of the winds that push the water towards the city," he added.

The main concern centers on Venice's Byzantine St. Mark's Basilica, with its ancient mosaics and marble columns, which are especially fragile.

On Tuesday, the nave of church was flooded for the sixth time in 1,200 years and the second in just 13 months. The saltwater almost filled the crypt, whose marble columns support the church.

Water through window

"The water was not supposed to inundate the crypt after work to seal it undertaken in the 1990s. But the tide was so high that the water poured in through the window," said Pierpaolo Campostrini, curator of the world heritage church.

Campostrini, who is also an academic at the city's Ca' Foscari University, talked to Reuters on Friday while trying to reach the huge St. Mark's Square once described as Europe's living room.

"If the crypt becomes a swimming pool, we'll face an unknown situation," he said, as water was pumped out of the basilica.

"The salt could cause a collapse of the vault, a risk that nobody wants to take." —REUTERS



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Greening our cities

Luxembourg—As hubs of employment, trade and innovation, cities are the engines of our economic growth, accounting for over 80 percent of global GDP. By mid-century, more than 6 billion people—almost 70 percent of the world's population—will live in urban areas, up from about 4 billion today.

Yet cities already use more than two-thirds of the world's resources and energy, accounting for over 70 percent of carbon dioxide emissions. As cities continue to grow, so will these numbers. Between 2011 and 2013, China used more cement in cities development than the United States did during the entire 20th century.

The future of our planet, then, depends on how we manage urban development. In addition to being the biggest contributors to climate change, cities are also among the most at risk, and thus have the most to gain from going green. With 90 percent of the world's urban areas on coastlines and at risk from rising sea levels, there is significant work to be done to protect the bulk of the world's population from these and other climate-related threats. Cities are where spending on climate action will have the biggest impact. Making cities more compact, connected and coordinated around green policies could yield economic savings of up to \$17 trillion by 2050.

For starters, we must do far more to reduce energy consumption, harmful emissions and

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air pollution, not least by improving energy efficiency in urban areas. Given that urban infrastructure is hard to change quickly (and lasts a long time), the time for a new conversation about urbanization is now. Cities need to develop plans to reduce CO₂ emissions, build resilience and involve all relevant sectors of the economy in the shift toward clean energy. Policymakers should be planning for adaptations to existing infrastructure and new long-term investments.

Many cities around the world are already integrating climate goals into their urban-development plans. Copenhagen has emphasized increasing its buildings' energy efficiency. Bangalore is investing in sustainable transport. And, among other good examples, Mexico City is focused on strengthening the resilience of its most vulnerable residents to extreme weather events.

More and more cities have come to realize that climate-friendly policies have immediate benefits in terms of both quality of life and economic growth. Green investment makes economic sense, because it tends to result in better municipal services, cleaner air and safer water. Indeed, solar energy is now

often cheaper than fossil fuels, and plastic recycling—a key to cleaning up our oceans—is a source of steady jobs. But cities also need to go further, by recognizing the benefits of a circular economy that minimizes waste.

"The 15 circular steps for cities," a guide from the European Investment Bank (EIB), shows that cities and their residents have much to gain—including a smaller carbon footprint—from reduced consumption and reuse of resources. Around the world, international development banks are providing cities with financing and technical assistance for climate-related projects. For the EIB, the priorities are energy efficiency, renewables and sustainable transport.

At the same time, governments need to introduce new regulations and offer bigger incentives to get projects off the ground, and to encourage more innovation among businesses. To that end, we need all stakeholders to be connected and on the same page. City networks such as C40 Cities, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy offer a good starting point. *Project Syndicate*

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4 minero, tiklo sa pagpoproseso ng ginto

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet - Apat na small scale miners ang dinakip matapos mahuli sa aktong nagpoproseso ng ginto sa Mankayan, Benguet, ayon sa Benguet Provincial Police Office, sa bayang ito.

Paliwanag ni Provincial director Colonel Elmer Ragay, magkasalukob na sinalakay ng mga tauhan ng Mankayan Municipal Police Station, Mines and Geosciences Bureau-Cordillera at Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang Sitio Panat, Barangay Suyoc, ng nasabing bayan, matapos makatanggap ng impormasyon na may nagpoproseso ng gold ore, gamit ang ball mill sa lugar, nitong

nakaraang Huwebes.

Nahuli sa akto at inaresto ang mga minerong sina Josue Abansi Delmas, 42, taga-Central Kapangan, Kapangan, Benguet, Kurt Tacay Briones, 32, taga-Tokmo, Loadan, Itogon, Benguet; Christopher Minong Mat-an, 33, taga-Itogon, Benguet at Rudy Juliano, 48, taga-Panat, Bgy. Suyoc, Mankayan.

Narekober sa mga ito ang dalawang motor (dynamo) na may halagang P23,000.00 at kalahating sako ng ore.

Sinampahan sila ng kasong paglabag sa Republic Act 7076 (Illegal Processing of Ore).

Rizaldy C. Comanda