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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



DENR gives estero rangers 6 months to bring about change

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

THE more than 1,000 "estero rangers" deployed to 700 barangays in Metro Manila were given six months to "bring about

change" in the estuaries assigned to them.

Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu has issued the grace period during the mass oath-taking and deployment ceremonies of the estero rangers held at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City on Friday.

With the deployment of the estero rangers, Cimatu expects to see some improvements in the physical condition and water quality of Metro Manila's creeks and tributaries in the next six weeks.

"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 stressed.

He also described the role of estero rangers as "swift, silent but producing tangible results."

Cimatu said the estero rangers would serve as the "communication link" between the DENR and the communities 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.

He expects the estero rangers to "bring about cultural change among those who live along esteros."

Cimatu reminded them that their "children will be the beneficiaries of what we are doing."

"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 that 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 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.



Cimatu to estero ranger: 'Bring about change'

THE more than 1,000 "estero rangers" deployed to at least 700 barangays in Metro Manila were given six months to "bring about change" in the estuaries assigned to them.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu announced the six-month period during the mass oath-taking and deployment ceremonies of the estero rangers held at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City on Friday.

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CIMATU LEADS OATH TAKING OF ESTERO RANGERS FOR MANILA BAY REHAB — Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (5th from right) administers the oath of newly-designated estero rangers who will help in the cleanup of esteros in the cities and municipalities around the Manila Bay area. Two estero rangers will be assigned in each of the 711 barangays in Metro Manila which are not reached by garbage trucks causing indiscriminate dumping of trash in these estuaries. Others in photo are (from L to R) Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretaries Juan Miguel Cuna, Benny Antiporda, Peter Tiangco and Rodolfo Garcia, and representatives of local government units in Metro Manila.



ROCA
2019

New agency should do better in Pasig cleanup

President Duterte has ordered the abolition of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) a month after he relieved its former head for alleged corruption. The PRRC was created by Administrative Order No. 7 way back in 1999 as an interagency body to oversee the implementation of the government's master plan to rehabilitate the river "to its historically pristine condition conducive to transport, recreation, and tourism."

The PRRC was created 20 years ago. One would expect that after 20 years, the problem of cleaning up the Pasig River should have been substantially solved. But it seems that all these years, this government agency has existed but the Pasig River and the Manila Bay into which it flows are today as dirty as ever.

In 2008, the Supreme Court called for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay and named 13 government agencies led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), each with a definite role to play in the total rehabilitation plan. Among these were the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, the Local Water Utilities Administration, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the Department of Health, the Philippine National Police, and the Philippine Coast Guard. Through the DILG, the local governments around Manila Bay were to play the major role of stopping the towns and other communities from dumping

their refuse into the waterways.

Somehow, however, the overall cleanup program never happened. There were efforts by special groups created by Malacañang to clean up the Pasig, but the river became increasingly polluted. Fish that managed to survive were declared unfit to eat, and all swimming was banned.

Finally, the Duterte administration scored a big success in cleaning up Boracay and turned its attention to Manila Bay and the Pasig River. Two weeks ago, the DENR announced its plan for the Pasig – it would appoint some 2,000 "estero rangers" to police the 203 esteros and other waterways flowing into the Pasig, to stop the dumping of household and human wastes into them. In announcing this major project, the DENR surprisingly made no mention of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission which should have been carrying out a cleanup program all these years.

With its abolition, the PRRC will give up its main functions to a Manila Bay Task Force which will have to work with several other agencies to achieve the total goal of cleaning up the bay. It is a formidable task which, in the estimation of DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, will take at least ten years.

We simply have to forget the last 20 years of the abolished PRRC and look forward to the secretary's rehabilitation program for the river and the bay and hope that he and succeeding DENR officials will be able to achieve this difficult goal in ten years as he expects.



EDITORIAL

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EDITORIAL

Dapat na mapabuti ng bagong ahensiya ang paglilinis sa Pasig

IPINAG-UTOS ni Pangulong Duterte ang pagbuwag sa Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) isang buwan matapos nitong sibakin ang dating pinuno ng komisyon dahil sa umano'y kurapsyon. Ang PRRC ay nilikha ng Administrative Order No. 7 noong 1999 bilang interagency, na tututok sa implementasyon ng plano ng pamahalaan para sa rehabilitasyon ng ilog "to its historically pristine condition conducive to transport, recreation, and tourism."

Dalawampung taon na ang nakalilipas mula ng maitatag ang PRRC. Sinuman ay aasahan na matapos ang 20 taon, dapat na nasolusyunan na ang problema ng paglilinis sa Ilog Pasig. Ngunit tila sa mga nakalipas na taong ito, nanatili ang ahensiya ngunit ang Ilog Pasig at Manila Bay na dumadaloy ngayon ay lalo lamang lumala.

Noong 2008, nagdesisyon ang Korte Suprema para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay at pinangalanan ang 13 ahensiya ng pamahalaan sa pangunguna ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), na bawat isa ay may tiyak na gampanin para sa buong rehabilitasyong plano. Kabilang dito ang Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), ang Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Local Water Utilities Administration, Metro Manila Development Authority, Department of Health, Philippine National Police, at ang Philippine Coast Guard. Sa pamamagitan ng DILG, nasa kamay ng mga lokal na pamahalaan nakapalibot sa Manila Bay ang mahalagang tungkulin na ihinto ang pagtatapon ng mga bayan at iba pang komunidad ng mga basura at dumi sa mga daanan ng tubig.

Gayunman, hindi kailanman nangyari ang programang ito. Mayroong pagsisikap ang ilang grupo na binuo ng Malacañang upang linisin ang Pasig, ngunit patuloy na lumalala ang polusyon ng ilog. Ang mga isdang nabubuhay rito ay idineklarang hindi ligtas kainin, at lahat ng uri ng paglangoy sa tubig ay ipinagbawal.

Hanggang sa napagtagumpayan ng administrasyong Duterte ang paglilinis sa isla ng Boracay at ibinaling ang atensiyon nito sa Manila Bay at sa Ilog Pasig. Dalawang linggo na ang nakalilipas, inanunsiyo ng DENR ang plano para sa Pasig — magtatalaga ng 2,000 "estero rangen" upang bantayan ang nasa 203 estero at iba pang daanan ng tubig na dumadaloy sa Pasig, upang mahinto ang pagtatapon ng mga tao ng kanilang basura at dumi rito. Sa paghahayag ng anunsyong ito, ipinagtaka ng marami na walang nabanggit ang DENR na Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, na silang dapat na nagpapatupad ng cleanup program sa mga panahong nakalipas.

Sa pagkabuwag ng ahensiya, isusuko ng PRRC ang kanilang pangunahing tungkulin sa Manila Bay Task Force na kailangang makipagtulungan sa iba pang ahensiya upang makamit ang kabuuang hangarin na malinis ang Manila Bay. Isa itong mahirap na tungkulin, na sa pagtataya ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, ay aabutin ng sampung taon.

Kaifangan na nating kalimutan ang 20 taon ng nabuwag na PRRC at sumuporta sa rehabilitation program ng kalihim para sa ilog at look at umasa na siya at ang mga susunod pang opisyal ng DENR ay matagumpay na makakamit ang napakahirap na hangaring ito sa loob ng sampung taon, tulad ng inaasahan.



DENR reviewing program to conserve tamaraw

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉@jonlmayuga

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is reviewing the Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP) in order to strengthen the conservation of the critically endangered tamaraw, or Mindoro dwarf buffalo.

Environment Assistant Secretary for Staff Bureaus Ricardo Calderon, the concurrent director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), said the TCP needs to be reassessed, along with the policy to protect and conserve the Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park (MIBNP), a protected area covered by the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act.

"We want to review the existing policy [on protected area] and the program. I will be talking to the PAMB [Protected Area Management Board] of Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park about it," he said.

The DENR and its partner in implementing the TCP recently launched fund-raising programs for the conservation of the wild buffalos, more popularly known as the Philippine tamaraw.

He said the TCP is running short of fund, a reason why two fund-raising events were held last month. Incidentally, October is declared as Tamaraw Month.

The fund-raising events are the 3-kilometer charity race on October 19 in order to augment the funds to conserve the tamaraw and empower the rangers directly protecting the species held October 19, and the showing of a documentary, titled *Suwag o Suko: Saving the Tamaraw from Extinction* on October 30 at the National Museum of Natural History.

Besides raising funds, Calderon said he wants to popularize the largest land mammal in the Philippines similar to the status now enjoyed by the Philippine

eagle, the largest bird of prey in the world which is also endemic to the Philippines.

The tamaraw can be found only on the island of Mindoro and nowhere else in the world. Like the Philippine eagle, Calderon said its extinction is a loss not only to the Filipino people but the rest of the world.

Started in the early 1990s, the TCP is originally a captive-breeding program, primarily to increase the population of the country's largest mammal.

Apparently, however, the program, which produced only a single tamaraw, a bull named Kalibasib, failed to meet expectations.

Eventually, the captive-breeding component of the program was discontinued, but other components to protect the tamaraw population against hunting for food and trophy, and illegal wildlife trade remained.

Meanwhile, as a protected area, the MIBNP is managed by the Protected Area Superintendent who answers to the PAMB, the highest policy-making body of a protected area under the Nipas law. It also has its own budget and a separate set of rangers that protect the park.

Calderon said it is high time to harmonize the program with the ecosystem-based conservation effort of MIBNP.

"In the first place, the MIBNP became a protected area because of the Philippine tamaraw," he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

According to Calderon, enhancing the protection of the MIBNP, and possibly expanding its coverage, will not only protect the Philippine tamaraw from being hunted for food and trophy or illegal wildlife trade, but also boost breeding through natural selection.

"What we are looking at is ecosystems-based protection and conservation measure for the tamaraw," he said.



Mga residente ng Laguna dumulog sa Kamara

PAGTATAYO NG LANDFILL TINUTUTULAN

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PAGTATAYO NG LANDFILL SA LAGUNA TINUTUTULAN

UMAPELA sa House committee on environment and natural resources ang mga residente ng Alaminos, Laguna na silipin ang pagpapak ng Malaysian company sa lalawigan na magtatayo ng isang sanitary landfill.

Sa isang manifesto na nilagdaan ng mga residente ay ipinaabot nito sa komite ang kanilang pagtutol sa paglalagay ng sanitary landfill sa kanilang lugar na maituturing umano na isang death sentence.

"Hindi po economic growth driver ang isang sanitary landfill, wala po tayong maaasahang kaunlaran dulot nito sa bayan, ang mga barangay na pagta-

tayuan nitong basurang ito ay wala nang pag-asang umangat at puntahan ng mga mamumuhunan, death sentence po ito sa ekonomiya ng mga barangay," nakasaad sa nilagdaang manifesto.

Ayon kay dating Liga ng mga Barangay Secretary General at Sangguniang Panlalawigan Chairman Lorenzo Boy Zuniaga, ipinaabot ng alkalde sa Sangguniang Bayan ang pagtatayo ng sanitary landfill ng Malaysian Company na Berjaya, sa ngayon umano ay tikom ang bibig ng pamahalaang bayan sa nasabing proyekto matapos na mabatikos ito sa social media, ito umano ang siyang

kanilang pinangangambahan dahil maaaring mabulaga na lamang sila at operational na ang landfill.

Ilan sa mga komento sa social media na tutol sa landfill ay galing pa sa mga residente ng Alaminos na mga Overseas Filipino Workers, binabatikos nito ang pamahalaang bayan sa pagpayag na magtayo ng sanitary landfill nang walang feasibility study na ginawa.

Hindi umano ang kikitain sa proyekto ang dapat na prayoridad kundi ang epekto nito sa kalusugan at ekonomiya.

Ang itatayong landfill sa Alaminos ay sinasabing tatanggap ng mga basura mula na-

man sa CALABARZON at Metro Manila.

"Ang mga residente po ay tutol dito, lubhang panganib po sa buhay at kalusugan ng ating mamamayan ang magiging bunga nito, airborne diseases, irreversible environmental degradation at ang pinsala nito sa ating mga bukal. Hindi na maibabalik sa dati sakaling magleak ang lason ng katas ng basura, wala pong 100% leakproof ang mga landfill" paliwanag ni Zuniaga na dating Chairman ng Committee on Environmental Protection ng Alaminos at isa sa mga signatory sa manifesto.

Bukod sa isyu ng kalusugan nangangamba rin ang mga residente sa kanilang kaligtasan dahil sa malalaking truck na daaran sa mga kalsada, Wala umano ang sapat na road network ang lalawigan upang daanan ng mga dambuhalang trak. **RNT**



Paglatayo ng sanitary landfill sa Laguna, tinututulan

Nagpasaklolo na sa House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources ang mga residente ng Alaminos, Laguna para silipin ang pagpasok ng isang Malaysian company na magtatayo ng isang sanitary landfill doon.

Sa isang manifesto na nilagdaan ng mga residente kabilang si dating Liga ng mga Barangay-Secretary General at Sangguniang Panlalawigan Chairman Lorenzo Boy Zuniga, ipinalam na ng punong bayan sa Sangguniang Bayan ang pagtatayo ng sanitary landfill na pag-aari ng Berjaya na isang Malaysian company. Subalit tikom umano ang

bibig ng pamahalaang bayan sa naturang proyekto matakpos na ring mabatikos sa social media, kaya nangangamba sila dahil maaaring mabulaga na lamang sila at operational na pala ang landfill.

Ang itatayong sanitary landfill sa Alaminos ay sinasabing tatanggap ng mga basura mula sa Calabarzon at Metro Manila.

"Hindi po economic growth driver ang isang sanitary landfill, wala po tayong maaasahang kaunlaran dulot nito sa bayan, ang mga barangay na pagtatayuan nitong basurang ito ay wala nang pag-asang umangat at puntahan ng mga mamumu-

hunan, death sentence po ito sa ekonomiya ng mga barangay," saad sa manifesto.

Giit ni Zuniga, lubhang mapanganib sa buhay at kalusugan ng mga mamamayan ang magiging bunga ng landfill dahil posibleng kumalat ang airborne diseases, irreversible environmental degradation at ang pinsala din nito sa mga bukal dahil wala naman umanong 100% leak proof ang mga landfill. Nangangamba rin sila sa kanilang kaligtasan dahil sa malalaking truck na dadaan sa mga kalsada at walang sapat na road network ang lalawigan para daanan ng mga dambuhalang sasakyan. (Gemma Garcia)



PAGTATAYONG LANDFILL SA LAGUNA TINUTUTULAN

Mga residente nagpasaklolo sa Kamara

**Ni RYAN PONCE
PACPACO**

UMAPELA sa House committee on natural resources ang mga residente ng Alaminos, Laguna na silipin ang pagpasok ng isang Malaysian company sa lalawigan para magtayo umano ng isang sanitary landfill.

Sa isang manifesto na nilagdaan ng mga residente, kanilang ipinaabot sa komite ang pagtutol sa paglalagay ng sanitary landfill sa lugar na maituturing umano na isang death sentence.

"Hindi po economic growth driver ang isang sanitary landfill, wala po tayong maaasahang kaunlaran dulot nito sa bayan, ang mga barangay na pagtatayuan nitong basurang ito ay wala nang pag-asang umangat at puntahan ng mga mamumuhunan, death sentence po ito sa ekonomiya ng mga barangay," nakasaad sa nilagdaang manifesto.

Ayon kay dating Liga ng mga Barangay Secretary General at Sangguniang Panlalawigan Chairman Lorenzo Boy Zuñiga,

ipinaabot ng Punong Bayan sa Sangguniang Bayan ang pagtatayo ng sanitary landfill ng Malaysian Company na Berjaya.

Sa ngayon umano, titikom ang bibig ng pamahalaang bayan sa nasabing proyekto matapos na mabatikos sa social media.

Ngunit, sinabi ni Zuñiga na kanilang pinangan-gambahan na posibleng mabulaga na lamang sila na operational na ang landfill.

Ilan sa mga komento sa social media na tutol sa landfill ay galing pa sa mga residente ng Alaminos na overseas Filipino workers (OFW), binabatikos nito ang pamahalaang bayan sa pagpayag na magtayo ng sanitary landfill nang walang feasibility study na ginawa.

Anila, hindi umano ang kikitain sa proyekto ang dapat na prayoridad kundi ang magiging epekto nito sa kalusugan at ekonomiya ng lugar.

Ang itatayong landfill sa Alaminos ay sinasabing syang tatanggap ng mga basura mula naman sa CALABARZON at Metro Manila.

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ay tutol dito, lubhang panganib po sa buhay at kalusugan ng ating mamamayan ang magiging bunga nito, airborne diseases, irreversible environmental degradation at ang pinsala nito sa ating mga bukal. Hindi na maibabalik sa dati sakaling mag-leak ang lason sa katas ng basura, wala pong 100% leak proof ang mga landfill," paliwanag ni Zuñiga na dating chairman ng committee on environmental protection ng Alaminos at isa sa mga signatory sa manifesto.

Bukod sa isyu ng kalusugan, nangangambarrin ang mga residente sa kanilang kaligtasan dahil sa malalaking truck na dadaan sa mga kalsada.

Nalaman sa mga ito na walang sapat na road network ang lalawigan upang daanan ng malalaking mga trak.

Umaasa ang mga residente na sisilipin ng Kamara ang nasabing proyekto at agaran itong ipahinto lalo at hindi umano ang Alaminos ang tamang lugar na maaaring pagtapunan na lamang ng basura mula sa iba't ibang lugar.



DILG vows support for Green Climate Fund project

By **ROMINA CABRERA**

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has pledged support for the first Green Climate Fund (GCF) project in the country.

The \$10-million GCF project will establish a multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning system (MH-IBF-EWS) in four identified local government units nationwide that are susceptible to climate change.

Tuguegarao City, Legazpi City, the town of Palo in Leyte, and New Bataan in Davao de Oro are the target beneficiaries of the multimillion-dollar project that was approved by the GCF board during its recent meeting.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año thanked the GCF for approving the project as he said it will help complement govern-

ment initiatives that ensure LGUs are equipped with the right information when dealing with climate change.

"Climate change has been a global issue that we can't just take for granted. We must acknowledge it and fortify our country with safety measures like the MH-IBF-EWS. As one of the most vulnerable countries that can fall victim to climate change, we should be proactive in developing counter-measures," Año said in a statement.

The DILG is one of the project's implementing agencies and has been tasked to lead the advocacy, outreach, and public awareness on MH-IBF-EWS.

The department will also help in the project's capacity-building initiatives for the LGUs, as well as in the updating of disaster and response protocols using the early warning system.

The MH-IBF-EWS provides tailored climate risk information for LGUs that use hazard forecasts, warnings and also convey specific impacts for the communities on the ground.

The project will implement four outputs, which include the generation of science-based multi-hazard weather and risk information, the establishment of the MH-IBF-EWS, the improvement of national and local capacities, and the forecasting of early actions.

The MH-IBF-EWS is spearheaded by the Climate Change Commission and Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda, also an alternate member of the GCF Board.

Other executing agencies are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Office of Civil Defense, World Food Program and the target LGUs.



PINAS MAY UN-GCF \$10-M AT \$58-M GRANTS PARA SA CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM

MASIGLANG tinanggap ni Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda ang balitang aprub na ang \$10-million grant ng United Nation Green Climate Fund's (UN-GCF) sa Climate Change program ni Pangulong Duterte at may kasunod pa itong \$58-milyon sa Pebrero sa susunod na taon.

Pinagtibay ng GCF Board ang \$10 million grant sa ika-24 na pulong nito sa Songdo, South Korea para sa panukalang "multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning system (MH-IBF-EWS)" sa Filipinas.

Ang GCF ay isang 'specialized UN financing mechanism' na nilikha upang pondohan ang mga inisyatibong magbabawas sa ibinubugang 'carbon' sa kalawakan, at mga proyektong magpapalakas sa kakayanan ng mahihirap na bansa laban sa pananalasa ng masamang panahon na bunga ng climate change.

Si Salceda na House Ways and Means Committee chairman, ang kauna-unahang Asiano na naging co-chairman ng GCF, kung saan siya ibinoto at iniluklok ng 172 bansa, kasama ang India at China noong 2013-2014.

Ayon kay Salceda, layunin ng programa ng Filipinas na tiyaking maisama sa 'climate risk profile' ng bansa ang lahat ng panganib kaugnay sa climate change gaya ng isinasaad sa 'Climate Risk Management Framework (CRMF)' para sa mga LGU, at isangkot ang lahat ng institusyon, kasama ang mga unibersidad at grupo ng pribadong mga eksperto sa sa pagbalangkas at pagtatag ng mga sistema para mabuo ang naturang 'climate risk profile.'"

Bukod sa unang \$10 million MH-IBF-EWS grant, tiniyak din ni Salceda ang susunod na \$58-milyong tatanggapin sa GCF sa susunod na Pebrero para sa programang

"Strengthening the Resilience of Most Vulnerable Coastal Communities to Climate Change" sa silangang baybayin ng Filipinas.

Kasama sa mga makikina-bang sa \$58-million project grant, ang 578 LGU sa 28 lalawigan, 9,024,000 manging-isda at magsasaka, 33 mga pamantasan, at mga 51 milyong mamamayang nakatira sa silangan baybayin ng bansa.

Kinilala sa sumunod na UN Conference of Parties sa Lima, Peru si Salceda kung saan bininyagan siyang "most senior global champion in disaster risk reduction" kaugnay sa mga nagawa niya bilang GCF co-chair at sa Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation" program niya sa Albay noong siya ay gobernador dito. Isa ang Legazpi sa 'pilot areas' ng MH-IBF-EWS, kasama ang Tuguegarao City; Palo, Leyte; at New Bataan sa Cagayan de Oro.



Flood flux

Bridges are supposed to be above water and vehicles are supposed to be passing through such a crossing. But climate change has altered that norm.

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Thus, water instead of vehicular traffic passed through Baculod Bridge in Ilagan City, Isabela at the height of typhoon "Ramon" on Sunday.

The same thing happened to Cabiseria 8 Bridge as the Cagayan, Magat and Pinacanauan rivers and their tributaries swelled with the incessant rains from "Ramon."

Floods also made Alicaocao Bridge in Cauayan City, Isabela impassable like the roads in Barangays Aggasian and Fugu in the provincial capital of Ilagan.

Eclipsing the irony of submerged bridges is the flooding of the already flooded city of Venice in Italy last week. On 13 November, the high tide peaked at six feet, flooding 85 percent of the city.

Mayor Luigi Brugnaro blamed the floods on climate change coupled with the reality that sea level is rising, while the city is sinking due to tectonic movement.

However, city councilors from two ruling parties were not convinced about that during a 2020 budget deliberation at the Ferro Fini Palace on the eve of the flooding. They rejected amendments proposed by another party to fund climate change countermeasures, such as funding renewable energy sources, replacing diesel buses with less polluting ones, phasing out polluting stoves and reducing plastic use.

Two minutes later, the chamber was flooded, Democratic Party councilor Andrea Zanoni reported in a Facebook post that included photos of the room under waist-deep water.

Climate change has spoken.

WJG @tribunephil_wjg



Lot owners now sell lands for Kaliwa Dam Project

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR

After months of haggling, some lot owners in Teresa, Rizal finally gave in to the offer of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to sell their lands to the Philippine government to pave way for the development of the ₱12-billion Kaliwa Dam project.

"The long process of negotiation with the lot owners of Teresa, Rizal, have finally reached fruition after 10 of those who were offered agreed to sell their properties to MWSS," said MWSS.

The lots will form part of the project site for the construction of the water treatment plants and tunnel outlet component of the Kaliwa Dam project.

Part of the New Centennial Water Source Project (NCWSP), the Kaliwa Dam project involves the construction of a massive dam in the provinces of Quezon and Rizal that will have a capacity to treat as much as 600 million liters of water per day (mld).

The project, pegged by the Duterte Administration as the biggest solution to the recurring water supply issue in Metro Manila, was awarded to China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC) and will be funded by the Chinese government through an Official Development Assistance (ODA) deal with the Philippines.

In compliance with the Republic Act (RA) 10752 or the Right-of-Way Act, MWSS said it engaged the services of Landbank of the Philippines to appraise the market value of the lots that will be affected by the project.

"The market value is defined as the estimated amount for which a property should be exchanged between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arms-length transaction after proper marketing wherein the parties had each acted knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion," MWSS said.

"[This is] a far contrast to expropriation act of a government taking privately owned property against the wishes of the owners," it added.

This development came weeks

after President Rodrigo Duterte said he will exhaust his 'extraordinary powers' allowed by the Philippine constitution in order to get the controversial Kaliwa Dam project going.

He said this after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) moved to issue the project its much sought Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), which was faced with strong opposition by environment groups and some local government officials who think their constituents will be negatively affected by the dam's construction.

The problem is that some Indigenous People (IP) communities in the provinces of Rizal and Quezon fear that they will be displaced because of the project, while local government officials think the construction of a 60-meter-high dam in their areas could result to flooding.

Because of this, the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) has not yet issued its go signal for the dam's construction.

On Monday, MWSS Administrator Emmanuel Salamat said the government's dialogue with IP communities in the areas is ongoing, but he declined to comment when asked if he thinks the NCIP can come up with a decision within this year.



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SOLE AGENCY EYED P2B for Water Resources

It will need around P2 billion aside from its branches like the Water Regulatory Commission, which will be in charge of monitoring the price

By Hananeel Bordey
@tribunephil_hana

The government will be needing at least P2 billion for the creation of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to ensure a sole agency wielding power over the country's water supply.

In a radio interview, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said the fund for new department does not include the budget for the Local Water Utilities Administration and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, and this will be only allocated to the creation of the DWR board and the Water Regulatory Commission.

"The core (of the DWR), which will serve as the National Water Resource Board, will need around P2 billion aside from its branches like the Water Regulatory Commission, which will be in charge of monitoring the price," Salceda said.

The department will be tasked to monitor the water sources in the country and ensure that the prices charged against the consumers will be reasonable.

"That's why we are going to create this to, at least, stabilize the constructive tension between the need to develop water and, at the same time, ensure that the price of water will not be expensive for the consumers," he added.

He underscored that the DWR will be the sole agency to be held responsible for any water shortage or crisis as it will serve as the decision-making body that will process matters related to the country's



SOLUTIONS to shortage and crisis are eyed with the creation of the Department of Water and Resources. TRIBUNE PHOTO

water resources.

"Right now, we keep on pointing fingers. We are barking up the wrong trees... Like what I said, we cannot just blame (Maynilad and Manila Water) because the responsibility of developing water is diffused. There is no outline or institution that is tasked to find water sources," he explained.



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Threaten rich biodiversity, fragile ecosystems

OCEANA added that the proposed land-reclamation projects in Manila Bay would threaten the rich marine biodiversity of the bay and disturb the already fragile ecosystems.

Fishes, wetlands, mangrove forest areas and water birds will be adversely affected by land reclamation in the bay.

The Manila Bay is a productive fishing ground. Pamalakaya National Chairman Fernando Hicap said that despite the dwindling fish catch, it is able to support the livelihood of small fishermen.

Assorted fish and other seafood can still be caught from the bay.

Sardines, mackerel mullet, threadfin, bream, squid, blue crab, round scad and fusilier are just a few of the commercially viable fish caught in Manila Bay, Oceana Philippines reported.

"Sixty-seven percent of Manila Bay's total value is accounted for by the fisheries industry alone. Reclamation will decrease fish population due to the loss of breeding grounds," Oceana Philippines warned.

Laws prohibiting land reclamation

RAMOS, an environmental lawyer, also cited numerous laws that prohibits the wholesale destruction of coastal ecosystems.

These include Republic Act 10654, or the Amended Fisheries Code, which prohibits the gathering or transporting of coral sand, fragments and other substances which make up marine habitat.

In the case of Manila Bay, a historical site because of the presence of the Spanish-era Walled City of Intramuros in Manila, land reclamation violates Republic Act 10055, or the National Cultural Heritage Act, specifically the modification and alteration of a national landmark.

On the issue of biodiversity

protection and conservation, land reclamation violates the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act. The Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park, formerly called the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, a Ramsar Site, stands to be affected by proposed dump-and-fill projects.

Land reclamation violates national law and plebiscite requirement for the substantial alteration of boundaries of local government units, particularly Section 10 and amount to illegal International Revenue Allotment disbursement to local government units under Section 285 of the Local Government Code, or Republic Act 7160.

"They should stop these projects because they are destructive and violates the right of every Filipino to the Constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology," Ramos said in an earlier interview.

Also, Ramos cited the fact that Manila Bay is a productive fishing ground that sustains the livelihood of small fishermen.

On top of this, a new species of sardine was recorded by scientists to occur and spawn in Manila Bay.

Bane or boon?

ACCORDING to the PRA, almost all land-reclamation project applications were submitted by LGUs and their private-sector partners.

With urban expansion through land reclamation, the LGUs' territory increases, which, also means that their share in Internal Revenue Allotment will most likely increase, as well.

With increased land territories, the LGUs' land assets and value will likely increase, thereby luring more investment. This will translate to robust economic activity and more revenues for the local government, as well as national government.

More important, with more land area for development, LGUs can identify a potential area for land development for public or private housing projects, the construction of local government complex housing vital LGU offices, establish a new business district, or possibly, a vast economic zone for industries that will be a boost to the local economic development.

On the other hand, the warning signs that the threats of climate change are real and may happen sooner than expected, might bring tragic loss of lives and destruction to public and private properties, and huge losses in investment.



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ECC VIOLATIONS

**EMB STOPS
BATANGAS
LAND DEV'T**

SAN PEDRO CITY—The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ordered a land developer to stop its "blasting and drilling" activities on Mt. Malipunyo in Sto. Tomas City, Batangas, following complaints from the villagers that it was conducting illegal quarry operations in the guise of an ecotourism project.

The EMB in Calabarzon region last week issued a cease and desist order against Adventureland International Leisure Corp., the company behind the development of a 252,600-square-meter land into a commercial and leisure park in Barangay Sta. Clara.

The company was also cited for a number of violations of the environmental compliance certificate (ECC), among them the lack of a drainage and wastewater facility, and for failing to install a wire mesh to prevent soil erosion and public signages.

In a telephone interview last week, Jearmane Gabo, Adventureland operations manager, said the company, on Oct. 30, had filed its appeal to the EMB's order, but it had yet to receive a reply.

Gabo also denied the company was conducting illegal quarrying on the mountain.

'Irreparable damage'

"[I]n order to prevent grave and irreparable damage to the environment, [Adventureland] is ordered to refrain from conducting any activity other than what is stipulated in the ECC. No drilling and blasting activities shall be allowed," read an Oct. 24 order signed by Noemi Paranada, EMB regional director.

In May, the local government of Sto. Tomas wrote Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to seek clarifications on the scope of the permits issued to Adventureland.

Municipal Administrator Salvador Geling, in the letter, said the local government had received numerous reports and complaints from villagers about the "seemingly wanton destruction" of the mountain to give way to the park development.

The project includes the construction of a commercial complex, a sports center, an airsoft battlefield and staff housing facilities. It requires "stripping and leveling" of some portions of the mountain to pave the way for a road network, from the ground to an elevation of at least 375 meters above sea level.

While Gabo denied that the firm was into quarrying, he admitted to "controlled and developmental" drilling and blasting, which he said were necessary processes to clear the way of hard, solid boulders.

—MARICAR CINCO INQ



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Chinese flag in Boracay upsets residents, netizens

By TARA YAP

ILOILO City – A flag of the Republic of China planted at the white beach of world-famous Boracay Island in Malay town, Aklan province, is stirring emotions among locals and netizens.

A photo surfaced on social networking site Facebook that shows a Chinese male tourist planting the China flag at Station 2.

"This is not ok. It would only be ok if we don't have a territorial dispute with China," Malay Town Councilor Nenet Aguirre Graf said in a phone interview Saturday afternoon.

Authorities are still tracing when

the act occurred as the person who uploaded the original photo deleted the Facebook post, but some witnesses said it occurred Friday morning.

The photo only gained traction when it was shared by radio reporter Jan Allen B. Ascaño.

Aside from the beach area, another photo of what appears to be the same man carrying a Chinese flag while inside the Balabag Elementary School also circulated.

Given the circumstances, Graf considered the act of the Chinese tourist as a form of disrespect and insult to Filipinos.

"I don't think we, as Filipinos, can do that when we go to China. We can't just go there and hoist our

flag there. You'd get arrested or deported," Graf exclaimed.

Graf clarified there's no ban of displaying a different country's flag in Boracay as it has a diverse population of foreigners and it hosts major international events.

"But there's no event during the past few days," Graf added.

Since the reopening of Boracay Island last October 2018, there's a growing list of controversies involving Chinese citizens including the mushrooming of Chinese-owned businesses and the presence of Chinese workers.

Last August, locals and netizens alike were outraged when videos surfaced of a Chinese child peeing along the beach while a diaper was buried in the sand.



A FLAG of the Republic of China is seen at the beach of world-famous Boracay Island in Malay town, Aklan province. (Facebook)



China flag sa Boracay beach, ikinagalit ng publiko

Inulan ng batikos at galit ng publiko ang viral na larawan kung saan makikita ang bandila ng Republic of China na itinanim sa puting buhangin ng sikat na isla ng Boracay sa bayan ng Malay, Aklan.

Kumalat sa social media, kamakailan ang larawan ng isang Chinese na turista na itinanim ang bandila ng China sa bahagi ng station 2.

"This is not ok. It would only be ok if we don't have a territorial dispute with China," pahayag ni Malay Town Councilor Nenette Aguirre Graf sa Balita sa isang panayam sa telepono.

Patuloy pang inaalam ng mga awtoridad kung kailan nangyari ang insidenteng ito, matapos i-delete ng nag-post ang larawan sa Facebook, bagamat may ilang nagsasabi na Biyernes ng umaga ito naganap.

Bukod sa beach area, isa pang

larawan ang kumakalat kung saan dala-dala ng lalaking nasa unang kumalat na larawan ang China Flag sa loob ng paaralan ng Balabag Elementary School.

Ayon sa lokal na opisyal, maikokonsidera itong pag-insulto sa mga Pilipino.

"I don't think we, as Filipinos, can do that when we go to China. We can't just go there and hoist our flag there. You'd get arrested or deported," giit ni Graf.

Nilinaw naman ng opisyal na hindi ipinagbabawal sa Boracay ang paglalantad ng ibang bandila lalo na't malaking bahagi ng populasyon sa isla ay mga dayuhan.

"But there's no event during the past few days," paglilinaw ng opisyal.

Tara Yap



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NEGLECT OF DUTY

IP SUES CIMATU OVER COFFEE PLANTATION CASE

By **Jhesset O. Enano**
@JhessetEnanoINQ

An indigenous peoples (IP) group has filed a suit against Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu for neglect of duty, allegedly for failing to stop the illegal operation of a coffee plantation on their ancestral domain.

The special civil action was filed by T'boli-Manobo S'daf Claimants Organization (Tamasco) on Friday before the Quezón City Regional Trial Court, with the support of Task Force Tamasco, an alliance of nongovernmental organizations supporting the legal claim of the indigenous group.

No IP consent

Tamasco claimed that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), under Cimatu, had violated the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act for failing to secure their consent before any activity will be done on their domain.

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC), which serves as Tamasco's legal counsel, said the Dawang Coffee Plantation encroached on the ancestral land of the T'boli and Manobo in South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat provinces.

The plantation is reportedly operated by M&S Co. under an Integrated Forest Management Agreement with the DENR.

LRC said this agreement expired in 2016, but was renewed by the DENR. INQ



Gov't lot in Eastwood Center sold for less than half its fair value

BY PETER TABINGO

THE Commission on Audit has affirmed the decision of its National Government Sector (NGS)-Cluster 8 declaring that the Appraisal Committee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region sold a government property in Eastwood Center, Quezon City in 2008 for less than half its fair value of P55.707 million.

In a decision dated October 30, 2019 but released only last Nov. 14, the COA Commission Proper denied the petition for review of DENR-NCR Appraisal Committee chairman Arturo Fabriquela seeking the lifting of the notice of charge that declared the P24.484 million selling price to be an under-

appraisal loss for the government.

COA chairman Michael G. Aguinaldo and Commissioners Jose A. Fabia and Roland C. Pondoc unanimously upheld the NGS-Cluster 8 ruling which determined that there was an under-collection of P31.223 million from the transaction.

"The appraisal made by DENR-NCR failed to consider the exact location of the subject property and its highest and best use or potential, which is for commercial purposes. In this aspect, the DENR's valuation of the subject property ... favored the buyer and caused loss to the government in the amount of P31,222,875," the COA said.

At the outset, the commission said that Fabriquela's petition for review may already be denied outright

on the ground that it was filed after the lapse 180 days or the maximum allowed period for appeal.

"A careful scrutiny of the records shows that the prescribed period had already lapsed when the petitioner filed his appeal. Appeal is not a right, but a mere statutory privilege, and must be exercised strictly in accordance with the provisions set by law," the court said.

Regardless if the appeal is given due course however, the COA said it would still uphold the finding of its Senior Technical Audit Specialist that the fair market value of the property was P55.707 million.

"Even if the petition is decided on the merits, it would still be denied. Clearly, the selling price of P24,484,125 is disadvantageous to the government," the COA said.



VULNERABLE LIST OF BIRD SPECIES

SURVIVAL OF PALAWAN'S 'KILIT' RESTS ON NEW VIEW OF FARM 'PEST'

By Maricar Cinco
@maricarcincoINQ

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—For years, conservationists have been working closely to save the blue-headed racquet-tail parrot (*Prioniturus platenae*), locally known as “kilit,” a noisy bird and notorious agricultural pest.

The kilit faces extinction with only about 10,000 birds left in Busuanga, an island off the northern tip of the Palawan mainland inhabited by around 70,000 people (Busuanga island is jurisdictionally divided into the municipalities of Coron and Busuanga).

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has classified the kilit as a “vulnerable” species threatened by increasing human population, poaching and habitat loss.

Community enhancement

In 2010, Manuel Reyes, a research professor and agroecological engineer at Kansas State University, started a community enhancement program called “Regalo ng Kilit” (Gift of Kilit) in Busuanga.

The program, in partnership with Katala Foundation, the

University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and other private organizations, aims to save the kilit by preserving the birds’ habitat.

“Note that I don’t use ‘biodiversity conservation,’ but ‘enhancement.’ Those are two different things,” Reyes, 62, said during his visit to the Philippines for the 2nd Kilit Festival held on Nov. 8.

Enhancement, he said, combines sustainable food production, tourism and income generation through “biodiversity-friendly” means.

The Kilit Festival is held yearly by students at Malbato Elementary School in Coron. Aside from vegetable growing, there are also a fun run, quiz bee, sports competitions and poster-making with prizes and goodies packed as “gifts” from the kilit.

The activity is funded by the US United Service Foundation.

“We need to enhance the mindset of the communities ... and reintroduce these species back to the island,” Reyes said.

Change in thinking

Farmers tend to drive away or shoot kilit, which feed on their crops like banana and rice.



Blue-headed racquet-tail parrots —CHIN FERNANDEZ/CONTRIBUTOR

In order for a community to appreciate the value of the bird, Reyes believes there has to be a change in the way of thinking, and that change has to start in schools.

The kilit program draws inspiration from another UPLB project in Mindoro province where schoolchildren are taught early about the tamaraw (*Bubalus*

mindorensis), an endemic but critically endangered species.

Tamaraw conservation is incorporated in regular subjects like reading and math.

Under the program, students are trained to grow vegetables and endemic plants that the kilit feed on in the forest.

That way, Reyes said, the



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Survival of Palawan's Kilit Rests on New View of Farm Pest

birds are drawn closer to homes and schools where they can thrive without threats from humans.

"Then, it's the students who will lead their parents and families [into protecting the kilit]," Reyes said.

Circle of life

But "reformation" doesn't happen overnight. For Reyes, it took years before his "180-degree turn."

As a young boy, he remembered traveling with his family to Palawan with a shotgun or a slingshot to hunt and collect endemic birds.

He would bring home to Manila his prized collection of Philippine parrots and the blue-naped parrot, or "pikoy," that several decades later would become "critically endangered" species.

Reyes' desire to help protect Palawan's parrots began when he returned in 2007 and saw "massive deforestation"—the result of the island's rapid transformation into a tourist destination.

Coron is home to a rich marine ecosystem—the country's last ecological frontier, they say—with its pristine beaches dra-

wing local and foreign tourists.

"It's a 'circle of life.' If you don't take care of the terrestrial [ecosystem], all those beaches, its water quality will also be destroyed," he said.

Regalo ng Kilit and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture signed a memorandum on Oct. 14 for continuing research on the kilit, its life cycle, as well as farming techniques for the people.

Flagship bird

They are also working together with the Asean Centre for Biodiversity in "strengthening linkages" not only in the Philippines but also in the rest of Southeast Asia.

Regalo ng Kilit is pushing the local government of Coron to make the kilit its flagship bird by 2020. In Busuanga town, another proposal is to make the Calamian deer its flagship species.

Making the kilit the face of conservation will help generate income from tourism, Reyes said. But more important, he added, it will increase awareness of the need to conserve the bird among the people. INQ



ACB: Keeping biodiversity intact a boon for farmers and tourism

PRESERVING the natural landscape and biodiversity improves the sustainability of farm operations and, in turn, farmers' incomes, the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) said.

"Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, provides the resources and supporting functions for farming and tourism. Thus, safeguarding biodiversity is essential to achieve sustainability in farm tourism for present and future generations," ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim said at the Sixth Philippine Farm Tourism Conference in Cebu City last week.

Speaking before an audience of agriculturists, farm and farm tourism business owners, representatives from government and nongovernment agencies, and researchers, Lim shared how biodiversity-friendly practices can boost farming and farm tourism.

She cited the "innovating farming method" of the farmers of Agusan Marsh in Agusan del Sur as an example of adapting to the natural landscape.

Since water in the marsh often inundates farms during rainy season, farmers decided to plant rice and other crops in floating bamboo paddies instead.

"Instead of trying to control the marsh, the locals have learned to adapt and build their farms according to the nature of the marsh," Lim said.

She explained that keeping the Agusan Marsh healthy contributes to the local tourism and provides additional income from community members who run boat tours.

Lim also encouraged farmers to make the most of the natural landscape.

"Instead of cutting down trees, plant crops that thrive under

the shade of trees like coffee," Lim said.

Forests are important to the health of watersheds, which supply water for the irrigation of farms and serve people's daily needs.

The ACB executive director pitched multicropping, crop rotation and other natural pest-management methods, instead of using pesticides, which threatens pollinators like bees.

Seventy-five percent of the world's food crops and nearly 90 percent of wild flowering species depend on pollination, according to an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services report.

A European Union-funded study estimated the value of pollination services to be approximately \$169 billion per year.

Lim emphasized the need to strike a balance between fulfilling the needs of the business and of tourists, and maintaining the natural condition of the area.

Citing the principles of sustainable tourism from the United Nations World Trade Organization, Lim explained, "Farm tourism should fulfill the social, aesthetic and economic needs of the farm owners and the tourists, while maintaining the life support systems, ecological processes and cultural integrity of the area. These systems and processes and their benefits come from biodiversity, so we need to protect biodiversity."

Meanwhile, protecting iconic and charismatic species can also



FLOATING bamboo paddies is an innovative farming method in Agusan Marsh in Agusan del Sur. DEAN BANG

be a source of tourism-based livelihood.

Lim pointed out that in Cambodia, farmers practicing biodiversity-friendly agricultural methods, such as chemical-free cultivation, help protect the critically endangered giant Ibis, the country's national bird.

"Because Ibis birds are rare, tourists want to see them," Lim said. "Farmers also become tour guides, and it becomes additional income for them."

Reacting to Lim's presentation, Mina Gabor, former Tourism secretary and current chairman and president of the International School of Sustainable Tourism, affirmed the importance of integrating biodiversity in farm tourism planning.

"Mahogany trees are water suckers," Gabor said. "And for some time now, we have noticed that any farm or anything that is planted near mahogany trees look undernourished, and farmers do not get the same healthy harvest as areas without mahogany."

Gabor asked farmers to refrain from planting mahogany, and to alert the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources should mahogany be growing in their farms.

By applying biodiversity considerations, like natural pest management, planting the right crops and trees, and adaptation to the natural environment to farm tourism, Lim said she is hopeful for the future of the farm tourism industry. She also emphasized the importance of working together.

"If we from the different sectors—agriculture, tourism and biodiversity—work together, share our knowledge, and maximize resources, we can achieve sustainable farm tourism," Lim said.

Farm tourism is the business of attracting visitors and tourists to farm areas, generally for educational and recreational purposes, encouraging economic activity that can provide both the farm and the community additional income.

The ACB, established in 2005, is Asean's response to the challenge of biodiversity loss. It is an intergovernmental organization that facilitates cooperation and coordination among the 10 Asean member states and with regional and international organizations on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of these natural resources.



US, PHL troops hold 2nd installation of artificial habitat reefs

UNITED States and Philippine military personnel, local government representatives, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and local residents partnered together for a second time to install artificial habitat reefs in Maragondon, Cavite, last month.

A total of 60 jackstone-type artificial habitat reefs were installed off the coast.

In August, the group also installed 30 artificial habitat reefs in the coastal area of Calatagan, Batangas.

Coral will eventually cover the sunken structure, revitalizing marine life and improving fishing livelihoods in the coastal communities of Cavite.

The project, named "Operation Pamamalakaya," included support by more than 500 personnel from the Philippine Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard, Philippine National Police, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office, DV Boer Farm, Magsasaka, municipality of Maragondon and Cavite LGU and residents, as well as US service members.

More than 40 military divers and barge crew members from the Philippines Air Force, Armed Forces of the Philippines Special Operations Command (AFP Socom), and United States Armed Forces assisted in the deployment of the artificial habitat reefs.



THE United States and Philippine divers partnered together for a second time to install artificial habitat reefs in Maragondon, Cavite, on October 8. USEMBASSY

"[Operation Pamamalakaya] aims to protect, develop, conserve and promote biodiversity in the marine environment for sustainable fisheries in the area, including adjacent fishing grounds," said Dexter Villamin of DV Boer Farm.

"Currently, Philippine coral reefs are threatened by pollution and destructive fishing techniques like the illegal use of explosives, trawling methods,

and general overfishing," said Maj. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, AFP Socom commander.

To address this reality, Pabayo said there needs to be an international approach between governments and NGOs dedicated to preserving and protecting these coral reefs, "which are a natural treasure. Great events like this with our US partners contribute to supporting not only the environment but also the local economy,"

For his part, Maj. Ryan Bone, a participating United States Armed Forces diver, said: "Marine biodiversity is vital for a sustainable ecosystem. It's wonderful to be able to assist in an endeavor that helps preserve this environment for generations to come."

The US, as a longstanding friend, partner and ally of the Philippines, continues to provide support to Filipino communities with marine conservation projects.



Mining conference set this week

VARIOUS stakeholders, mining companies and allied industries will gather for the annual national mining safety and environment conference in Baguio City this week.

Organized by the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association for almost seven decades now, the Annual National Mine Safety and Environment Conference is the forerunner in the promotion of occupational safety and health, environmental management and social responsibility in the mining industry.

The 66th ANMSEC will run from November 19 to 22 at the Camp John Hay Trade and Cultural Center.

"We've prepared an array of activities that highlights mining's best practices and commitment to mine safety and environment of member-companies," said Walter Brown, president of PMSEA.

Brown said this year's gathering will be an opportunity for mining companies and mining-support industries to affirm their commitment to ensuring mine and environmental safety with the social responsibility to respond to disasters such as the recent Mindanao earthquakes in mind.

The four-day event will be capped by dinners, welcome night and cocktails, and mining night for guests and participants.

"It will be lots of fun, but also full of work, as we discuss issues and concerns in mine safety and environment," Brown said.

The event will highlight the awarding of the Presidential Mineral Industry Environment Award that recognizes the outstanding levels of dedication, initiative and innovation in the pursuit of excellence in environmental management in the mineral development and utilization.

This year's theme, "Culture, Care, Change," highlights the resilience of the industry to the challenges felt by the minerals development sector around the globe.



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THE REPORT OF PHILIPPINE PRESS
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Biomass and coal co-combustion still up for technology improvement

BY MYRNA M. VELASCO

The co-combustion of coal and biomass fuels for electricity generation is still fledgling on efficiency rate, hence, experts have been battling for advancements on the technology prior to commercial deployment.

In an interview in Vietnam with Junji Morinaga, project director of the coal technology division of Japan, Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC), he noted that the target is to reinforce the co-firing efficiency rate to two-digit level from currently at 3.0 to 5.0-percent.

"There is a limitation of about 3.0 to 5.0-percent because there's still technical constraint. We are now working jointly with some Japanese companies

to improve the co-combustion ratio of biomass and coal up to 20-percent," he emphasized.

The Japanese firm executive said they have several pilot plant-projects to test the viability of coal and biomass co-combustion so emissions from coal-fired power facilities could be brought down.

"We have various demonstration projects for co-firing of biomass and coal, but still very small capacity - it's at the range of 10 megawatts to 150MW," he said, noting that these facilities are generally sited in Tokyo.

The Japanese firm said it is importing pellets from Canada and other parts of the world that it utilizes as feedstock for its coal-biomass co-firing ventures. Pellet fuels are generally from compressed

organic materials - the likes of industrial waste and co-products, agricultural residues as well as energy crops.

"Biomass is very important for co-combustion especially for the future to bring down the emission of coal plants. We have domestic biomass resources, but it's still very expensive, it is much cheaper to import pellets," Morinaga stressed.

In the Philippines, it is the energy investment arm of San Miguel Corporation that has been pushing for the co-firing of coal and biomass for its power facilities in various parts of the country.

The target is to use rice husks as biomass feedstock for electricity generation that will amalgamate it with its existing coal-fired generating facilities in Davao in Mindanao; and Limay, Bataan in the Luzon grid.



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FORECASTING

**4 AREAS CHOSEN
FOR DISASTER
EARLY WARNING
PROJECT**

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Four localities have been chosen as pilot areas for a \$10-million project that would give them ample heads-up on looming danger from disasters.

In a statement on Sunday, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said that Tuguegarao City, Legazpi City and the towns of Palo in Leyte and New Bataan in Davao de Oro (formerly Compostela Valley), which were all prone to natural calamities, would be the target areas for the multihazard impact-based forecasting and early warning system (MH-IBF-EWS).

Green Climate Fund

He noted that the establishment of MH-IBF-EWS in the four localities was the country's first Green Climate Fund (GCF) project approved by its board in a three-day meeting last week in Songdo, Korea.

GCF is a global financial mechanism, under the UN framework convention on climate change, created to support efforts of developing countries to limit or reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change.

In the Songdo meeting, the GCF board agreed to allocate a total of \$407.8 million for various projects on climate change adaptation and GHG emission reduction in different countries, including the Philippines.

"The DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) thanks the GCF board for approving the project as it will complement the efforts of the government to ensure that our LGUs (local government units) are equipped with the right risk information that will enable them to act promptly and decisively on impending hazards," Año said.

The DILG is one of the project's implementing agencies and will lead capacity-building initiatives for the localities and updating of disaster preparedness and response protocols using the impact-based early warning system.

The other agencies are the four pilot localities: the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration; Department of Environment and Natural Resources; Office of Civil Defense; and World Food Programme.

"Climate change has been a global issue that we can't just take for granted. We must acknowledge it and fortify our country with safety measures like the MH-IBF-EWS. As one of the most vulnerable countries that can fall victim to climate change, we should be proactive in developing countermeasures," Año pointed out.

He explained that the MH-IBF-EWS intended to translate hazard forecasts into warnings that convey location and specific impacts.

INQ



Thomas M. Orbos STREET TALK

Attacking not just traffic but pollution as well

SOMETIME last year, we were pleasantly informed of an international report that cited 11 of our cities as among the cleanest in Southeast Asia. It was short lived as it turns out. According to Greenpeace, such rankings stemmed from the lack of proper monitoring systems in the country. Metro Manila is a heavily polluted city and we who live here know it. We don't need such air monitoring equipment to tell us, otherwise.

A big source of these harmful air particulates come from the transport sector. And being named by traffic mobile app, Waze, as the country with the worst traffic congestion, we can expect a high percentage of such harmful particulates present in our environment. According to the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, 65 percent of total carbon emissions in the Philippines comes from our motorized vehicles with close to 30 percent of that from our jeepneys. If this continues without any form of intervention, there will be an increase of 200+percent of these harmful emissions by 2030.

This will have a tremendous impact on our national state of health. And we are not in good standing already. As of 2010, national health costs, mostly respiratory illnesses from degrading air quality was 1.5 percent of our gross domestic product. In 2018, the World Health Organization reported that the country had the third-highest number of deaths globally due to air pollution.

Good that we have the Clean Air Act to set forth the road map for our country to protect our environment from harmful air pollutants. This law laid the foundation for several directives from various government departments including the Department of Transporta-

tion. Among the programs of the department is the Motor Vehicle Inspection System and, of course, the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program that would modernize not just the jeepneys but all the other modes of mass road public transport. A key component of this program would be the shift from Euro 2 to Euro 4 engines. I had a telephone conversation with the LTFRB Chairman two weeks ago and he is confident that we will hit the targets and meet the deadline to modernize the present jeepney fleet, as set by President Duterte. That would be next year. And although, I myself, would believe a more realistic date of completion of two more years, nevertheless, it would still be good news for all of us.

We can do more. One way is to really push policies on low-carbon urban mobility. This would include, as I mentioned in my previous column, providing more incentives, such as in the form of tax exemptions to manufacturers and users of such alternative transport.

The government also needs to spearhead and redirect our current transport policies from a highly motorized orientation, such as roads and highways to more basic mobility. I am basically referring to providing more adequate and secure walking and biking areas.

Walking and biking are last mile endeavors. Hence, if this is the direction that we need to take, then government infrastructure programs should also provide for adequate bike lanes and pedestrian walkways that would connect to main transport arteries, such as rails, bus and jeepney lines.

When I was still in government, we mapped out a Metro Manila-wide network of exclusive pedestrian walkways and bike lanes that would connect all the 17 LGUs of Metro Manila. The network would include all the riverbanks and government lands. It can still be done. The areas are still there. And it is not expensive at all.

Fighting air pollution and global warming is an undertaking that we all need to work on together with the government at the helm. It starts with improving our state of current motorized transport conditions. But it also means lessening our dependency on such motorized transport and going back to providing infrastructure to accommodate our basic form of mobility.

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TO PROMOTE environmentally sound management of broken and discarded electrical and electronic equipment, Barangay West Triangle in Quezon City holds an e-waste collection event in collaboration with the National Environmental Authorities. The event was carried out in line with the 'Safe PCB and E-Waste Management Project' led by the DENR- Environmental Management Bureau and funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. (Alvin Kasiban)



TITLE:

HINDI biro-biro ang vaping o e-cigarette smoking.

Mabilis na nakamatay ito.

Kung aabutin ka ng 20-30 taon bago ka magkakanser sa sigarilyo o tabako, anak ng tokwa, sa loob lang ng 1-2 taon, pupwede kang matigok sa vape o e-cigarette.

1 MILYON SA PINAS

Merong palang isang milyong nagbe-vape sa Pinas sa nakalipas na 10 taon.

Noon kasing 2009-2010 nagsimulang sumikat ang vaping sa mahal kong Pinas bilang pamalit sa paninigarilyo.

Sabi ng mga may gawa ng e-cigar, mahigit 90 porsyentong mas malinis at hindi magkakaroon ng sakit ang gagamit nito.

Kaya naman, biglang dumami ang nagbe-vape ngayon na Pinoy na dating naninigarilyo na gustong tumigil sa paninigarilyo.

At sa paggawa ng batas sa Pinas laban sa pagyoyosi, nahuli ang pagbabawal ng vape sa mga lugar na bawal ang paninigarilyo at pagbebenta nito sa mga menor-de-edad.

39 PATAY SA AMERIKA

Natataranta ang mga Kano sa mabilis na pagkamatay ng mga nagbe-vape na kababayan nila.

Sa loob lang ng nakalipas na tatlong buwan, 39 ang idineklarang patay sa vaping.

Sa buong Amerika, may mahigit sa 2,000 ang nasa ospital at natagpuang sira ang baga dahil sa vaping.

Pero ang kinatatatutan nila ngayon, mga Bro, ay ang pagtantiya ng New Jersey Hospital Association na dadagsain sila ng libo-libong magkakasakit.

Aboot sa 16,000 ang magiging pasyente nila sa katapusan ng taong ito lamang.

Paano ang ibang mga estado ng Amerika?

PANAY SIRA ANG BAGA

Lahat ng nasa ospital at namatay sa Amerika, pawang sira ang mga baga.

Hindi kanser ang sakit nila kundi bagang sira.

'Yun pala, may kemikal ang vape na nakasira sa labas ng baga.



ULTIMATUM

NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

VAPING PATIGILIN MUNA

Ang huling pasyente sa isang estado 16-anyos at isang atleta, dalawang taon lang na nag-vape, muntik na siyang namatay.

Pinalitan ang dalawa niyang baga ng bagong baga mula sa ibang tao.

Dahil sira ang kaniyang mga baga, hindi sila makahinga, may dugo ang dura at iba pa.

MARIJUANA, SARI-SARING FLAVOR

Napag-alaman na hinahaluhan ng marijuana ang mga palaman ng vape.

Puro nicotine dapat ang laman ng vape pero hinahaluhan ito.

Isa na nga ang marijuana.

Habang nagtatagal ang pagbebenta ng e-cigarette, naging mapamaraan ang mga gumagawa.

Nilalagyan na nila ng mga pampabango kaya naman may mga mango flavor, cherry flavor at iba pa.

Itong marijuana, mga Bro, ang isang natagpuan ng mga siyentista at doktor na pinanggalingan ng lason sa mga nagbe-vape.

At lumalaki ang paninirala na maging ang mga flavor na idinaragdag ay nakalalason na rin.

Ang matindi, dahil sa sarap ng amoy dahil sa mga flavor, pati mga bata na 11 years old ay nagbe-vape na rin.

Nicotine plus flavor, masarap nga.

Pero saan pupunta ang milyong-milyong Kano na nagbe-vape na ngayon?

VITAMIN E ACETATE

Nitong huli, natagpuan ng mga doktor at scientist ang nakatatakot na kemikal na inihahalo sa palaman ng vape.

Vitamin E Acetate.

Synthetic o gawa-gawa lang na vitamin ito at galing sa petrolyo.

Itong pinakamatindi umanong lason.

Kung ang Vitamin E na natural ay gustong-gusto ng katawan ng tao, gustong-gusto namang ilabas ng katawan natin ang Vitamin E Acetate dahil lason nga ito.

Pwede lang gamitin ito sa labas ng katawan ng

tao pero hindi pupwede sa loob.

Ito talaga umano ang naninira nang todo sa baga ng tao.

SA PINAS

Mayroon nang sinusuri na nagkasakit sa Kabisayaan dahil sa vaping.

Kung mapatutunayang may sakit sa baga at vaping nga ang pinagmulan nito, maghandahanda na tayo.

Baka may mga susunod nang maospital na sira ang mga baga.

At siyempre pa, susunod ang pagtawag sa kanila ni San Pedro.

Sa Amerika at sa Britanya, maraming libreng gamot, doktor at ospital.

Pero sa Pinas?

Hindi ka lang mamatay sa iyong sakit kundi sa kamahalan ng mga gamot, doktor at ospital.

Malamang na matigok ka kaysa mabuhay kung masira ang iyong baga dahil sa yosing e-cigarette.

PALUSOT SA DROGA

Heto pa ang dapat na pag-aralan ng mga awtoridad sa mahal kong Pinas.

Dapat masuri ang lahat ng mga nagbe-vape.

Wala kayang matatagpuan na may halong shabu, marijuana, cocaine at iba pa sa vape ng mga ito?

Kasi, baka pinalulusutan lang tayo ng mga druglord, adik at tulak at naging ligal na ligal ang mga droga sa pamamagitan ng vape.

Hindi lang dapat buwis at kontrolin ang vaping sa mga no-smoking area.

Dapat talagang magkaroon ng pagsusuri sa mga palaman ng vape para mapigilan ang pagkakasakit at kamatayan ng mga gumagamit nito.

Kung pupwede, ipatigil muna ang paggamit nito at magkaroon ng pagsusuri sa lahat ng e-cigarette.

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