

DATE : 12-07-19

DAY : Saturday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



12-07-19

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 17

Cimatu wants waste-to-energy facilities that won't violate any law

By Rio N. Araja

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu wants to ensure that the establishment and operation of a waste-to-energy facility for the treatment of municipal solid wastes will not violate any law.

He issued Administrative Order 2019-21 providing the guidelines on environmentally sound evaluation, establishment, operation and decommissioning or closure of waste-to-energy technologies for the management of the municipal solid wastes.

"With these guidelines, we hope that we will be able to demonstrate in a pilot basis one solution to the waste problem using waste-to-energy method without violating Republic Act 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999," he said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is looking at waste-to-

energy as a cleaner and more sustainable alternative to the traditional sanitary landfill, which is the waste disposal method allowed under RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

The DENR chief said the country's garbage woes were only getting worse, especially in Metro Manila, that generates about 56,000 cubic meters of trash per day.

"The problem on solid waste is one of the primary issues that we must address immediately," he said.

He gave the assurance that the waste-to-energy guidelines "adhere to the policy of the government to ensure the protection of public health and environment."

The order follows set guidelines and targets for solid waste avoidance and volume reduction through source reduction and waste minimization measures in accordance with ecologically sustainable development practices.



TITLE:

PAGE 1/

12-07-19

DATE

Guidelines sa waste-to-energy facilities inilabas ng DENR

BILANG solusyon sa maayos na paglutas sa problema ng basura naglabas ng guidelines ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources para sa pagkakaroon at mahusay na operasyon ng waste-to-energy facilities para sa treatment ng municipal solid waste sa bansa.

Sa kanyang pagsasalita sa forum ng Taguig City nilong nakalipas na Huwebes sinabi ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na ang guidelines sa nakapaloob sa DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-21 na kanyang nilagdaan nitong nakalipas na Nobyembre 26.

"With these guidelines, we hope that we will be able to demonstrate in a pilot basis one solution to the waste problem using WTE method without violating Republic Act 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999," ani pa ni Cimatu sa ginanap na forum na inorganisa ng Stratbase Group.

Tinukoy ng WTE na ang energy ay nakuha mula sa waste, na ang konbersasyon ng non-recyclable waste materials sa useable heat, electricity o fuel ng variety ng proseso.

Ayon kay Cimatu, ang DAO ng nagbibigay ng guidelines sa environmentally-sound evaluation, establishment, operation at decommissioning o closure ng WTE technologies ng MSW management.

Ang MSW ay kahulugan ng order ng waste na produce ng activities ng local government units, na kabilang sa kombinasyon ng residential, commercial, institutional at industrial trash at street litter.

Nais ng DENR na ang WTE ay cleaner at mas sustainable alternative sa tradisyunal sanitary landfill, na ang waste disposal ay pinapayagan sa lalim ng RA 9003 o ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act ng 2000.

Sinabi ni Cimatu na ang basura ng bansa ay patuloy na tumalala lalo na ang Metro Manila na nagdadala ng basura ng 56,000 cubic meters ng basura bawat araw.

Kaugnay nito, tiniyak ni Cimatu na ang WTE guidelines ay sumusunod sa polisiya ng gobyerno para tiyakin ang proteksyon ng publiko sa kalusugan at kalikasan. **SANTI CELARIO**



TITLE:

PAGE 17



Garbage crisis

Around Manila Bay, the government is preparing guide-

EDITORIAL

lines for waste-to-energy projects for municipal solid waste. Measures are also being readied to improve regulation of single-use plastics. Such efforts are being ramped up as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources warns that Metro Manila is facing a "garbage crisis."

The DENR aired the warning near the end of a year that started with President Duterte ordering the cleanup of Manila Bay. While the DENR sees only 80 percent completion of the task in two years, even this target is challenging.

More than plastic pollution, the culprit in this crisis is weak waste management. Manufacturers have pointed out that single-use plastics, which are non-biodegradable but can be recycled, are still needed for food safety and proper food preservation. The problem is improper garbage disposal — not just of plastic items but also of other types of materials such as glass, metals, paper, fabrics, pathological and industrial waste.

With 190 kilometers of coastline in Manila Bay and 17 major river systems linked to it, the bay

remains heavily polluted despite regular cleanups, according

to the DENR. Metro Manila alone produces 9.3 million kilograms of solid waste every day, of which only about 85 percent is collected. The rest ends up in waterways, most of which washes into the bay.

Among the biggest culprits are informal settlers and thousands of business establishments, the DENR said. The businesses can be regulated and fined for pollution. The bigger challenge is dealing with solid waste from informal settlements, where many households lack sewerage connections and sanitation facilities and where garbage collection service is spotty. To improve garbage management in these areas, local governments can work with the private sector to offer money-for-trash or *perasa basura* schemes, to encourage recycling and garbage segregation.

People generally dislike living in a filthy environment. With the right waste management programs and the provision of the necessary facilities, people can be encouraged to practice proper garbage disposal. Combined with other measures implemented by the government, it's possible to end this crisis.



DENR ipag-uutos na ang ban sa single-use plastics

NAKATAKDANG maglabas ng kautusan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para ipagbawal sa buong bansa ang single-use plastics.

Sa forum sa Taguig City nitongHuwebes, sinabi ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu na magpapalabas siya ng department order sa loob ng dalawang linggo.

Sa ibinabalangkas na kautusan tinatalakay din anya ang pag-recycle sa plastic.

Binanggit ng kalihim ang pagiging pangallo ng Pilipinas sa mga bansang source ng plastic pollution sa karagatan.



CIMATU INSTRUCTION TO ENVIRONMENT OFFICIALS

'DON'T LET A SINGLE PINE TREE DIE IN BAGUIO'

By Vincent Cabreza
@vincentcabrezaINQ

BAGUIO CITY—"Don't let a single pine tree die in Baguio." This was the instruction given by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to environment officials here on Friday.

Cimatu inspected the city's sewage treatment plant and its decommissioned dump, which would be converted into an ecological park in 2020.

The old Irisan dump temporarily houses two machines that convert kitchen and market waste into powdered fertilizer while the city government finalizes plans for a Japanese firm to build a waste-to-energy plant next year.

But the trees remain Cimatu's chief concern. He said he was alarmed at the rising number of dying pine trees, noting that younger trees meant to replace them have not been growing and expanding fast enough given the city's problem with overdevelopment.

About 2.5 million trees still thrive in the city, 400,000 of which are Benguet pine species, according to an inventory ordered by Cimatu in February.

Rebuilding forest

The biggest concentration of Baguio forests is within government reservations like Camp John Hay and the Philippine Military Academy.

Baguio is equated with pine trees, Cimatu told visiting military officials enrolled in the National Defense College

of the Philippines whom he met briefly at City Hall.

"But when I played golf here [in February], at every hole I saw 10 dying trees. So for all 18 holes, almost 200 trees were dying. Why were they dying?," Cimatu said.

"The next generation of pine trees [near urban settlements] is too small if all the [mature] pine trees die at the same time," he said.

He added: "But the pine trees should not die in this generation ... I am directing my regional director [of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources] to make sure not one pine tree dies ... I don't care how you do it."

Baguio is rebuilding its tree line after an urban carrying capacity report concluded that the city's forest cover was "way below the target standard of 40 percent."

Tree cutting moratorium

A study commissioned by the National Economic and Development Authority said "massive reforestation and the protection of [Baguio's] forest reservations are urgent measures needed to maintain ... [their function] as a life support ecosystem."

Cimatu also promised to take up a proposed Baguio moratorium on tree cutting and building constructions that had been transmitted to the Office of the President.

The moratorium will allow the city to rehabilitate public service facilities such as its sewage system.



EVERY TREE LIVES Concerned about the dwindling Baguio pine trees, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu directed regulators to make sure no tree dies under their watch. —EV ESPIRITU

Mayor Benjamin Magalong told Cimatu that the city is investing in modern wastewater treatment plants since it needs to clean water discharged into the headwaters of rivers that flow down to the provinces of Benguet, La Union and Pangasinan.

A study suggested putting up treatment facilities near the headwaters or catchment basins of waterways in the city, among them the

Balili, Bued and Agno-Ambalanga river systems, and runoff rainwater collecting at the Rock Quarry settlement here. There are also plans to put up treatment plants at the Burnham Lake, the public market and the abattoir, which are major sources of Balili pollution.

The city is tapping the Baguio Water District to oversee liquid waste clean-up because it can measure how much water each household consumes. INQ



Region 2 boosts forest management

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

MORE than a hundred people's organizations in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) were recognized on Wednesday for their contributions in government's efforts in maintaining and improving the integrity of forests and forestlands in the region during the Community-Based Forest Management-People's Organization (CBFM-PO) Summit and Trade Fair held in Tuguegarao City.

The three-day CBFM-PO summit and trade fair was held at the Rogelio B. Bagayan Nature Park

and Wildlife Center in Tuguegarao City where POs sold products harvested from their CBFM areas.

The event also served as a venue to share insights and best practices, and discuss issues relevant to the implementation of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) programs.

According to lawyer Antonio Abawag, DENR Region 2 executive director, the event also aimed to strengthen collaboration between the DENR and beneficiaries of its programs, with the aim of achieving sustainable management of forests and forest resources.

He said POs are the DENR's partners in the implementation of the national government's

CBFM program for more than 20 years now. The program was adopted by the Philippine government in 1995.

Abawag explained CBFM aims to achieve sustainable management of forests and forest resources alongside the promotion of social justice. It also aims to improve the well-being of local communities and give recognition to upland communities through POs as partners in the protection, development and management of forestlands.

"Through the program, the DENR Region 2 has built a stron-

ger partnership with the 104 people's organizations who are now stewards of the more than 265,000 hectares of forestland issued with CBFM agreements all over Cagayan Valley," Abawag said.

With the CBFM having the battle cry "people first and sustainable forestry will follow," Abawag said the government firmly believes that when the needs of the local communities are addressed, they will take their active role to protect and manage forests, believing these are their very source of livelihood.

Also extending technical assis-

tance to the POs are the Department of Agriculture, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Tourism, Department of Trade and Industry, Land Bank of the Philippines, Cooperative Development Authority, and Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.

"These government agencies' programs and projects that the POs avail of can empower and improve the technical capabilities of the POs in the development and management of their areas and promotion of the products derived from these areas," Abawag added.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

A.4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

12-07-19
DATE

TIME:

PAGE 17

'PUBLIC INTEREST SHALL ALWAYS PREVAIL'

GOV'T TO CONTEST ARBITRAL AWARD TO MANILA WATER

By Jerome Aning
@JeromeAningINQ

The Ayala family-owned Manila Water Inc. is not the exemplary and outstanding company it is painting itself to be and has in fact disadvantaged the Filipino people through onerous provisions in a concession agreement that it violated when it failed to develop new waters sources and even caused continual water shortages, according to Solicitor General Jose Calida.

"We will not allow corporate greed to triumph without a fight," Calida said in a statement on Friday, reiterating that the government would exhaust all legal remedies to get a better deal for Filipino consumers, enforce the Constitution which

requires all public utilities to government regulation and prevent abusive profiteering off the people.

"The OSG (Office of the Solicitor General) shall continue to protect and defend the interest of the public," Calida said. "Public interest and welfare shall always prevail. The OSG will exhaust all available remedies to this end."

Calida conceded that the government is obliged to keep secret the proceedings of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Singapore that awarded Manila Water compensation of P7.39 billion for losses the water utility supposedly suffered between June 2015 and November 2019 because the government prevented the company

from increasing its price.

But, Calida stressed, the government "cannot just simply stand by and watch" the water firm "spin the circumstances and paint itself as an exemplary, outstanding company" when, in fact, the arbitration proceeding "tells a very different story, one which will naturally reveal itself through the next actions we will undertake."

"Our next steps will show that the arbitral award was not, to quote Manila Water, due to a 'procedural lapse' by [the] government. It is a company's refusal to become the subject of a legitimate regulation," he said.

Manila Water itself announced in February that the company "continued on its path to growth in 2018, post-

ing net income increase of 6% from the previous year to reach P6.5 billion."

Last month, Manila Water complained on its website that it spent up to P7 billion for the first three quarters of 2019 because of the penalty the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System imposed on the company for reneging on its obligation to provide water to Metro Manila and surrounding areas.

Still, the company reported earnings of 4.4 billion as of the 3rd quarter and admitted that the "dampened performance" was caused mainly by the water supply shortage in its Manila Concession early this year. INQ



Angat Dam water level continues to rise

MALOLOS – The water elevation of Angat Dam in Bulacan continued to rise days after Typhoon Tisoy left the country.

Monitoring by the provincial disaster risk reduction and management office showed that the dam's water level slightly rose to 195.06 meter yesterday from 194.58 meters on Thursday.

Sevillo David Jr., executive officer of the National Water Resources Board, said the water allocation for Metro Manila's domestic use remains at 40 cubic meters per second despite the increase in Angat Dam's water level.

– Ramon Efren Lazaro



FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

Politicized

President Rodrigo Duterte should pipe down and think through the complex consequences of what he threatens to do with the water concession contracts. Over the long term, what he intends to do will cause the economy more harm than good.

Last Tuesday, the President went into a furious rant over what he sees as defective contracts handed out to the water concessionaires. He overstated his case. He should listen less to the populists and consult more with the economists.

If the populists had their way, they would want water tariffs priced as close to zero as possible. These are incurable free-riders who think nothing about the realities of financing costs, business continuity and shareholder interests. If we do not deal with these things properly, the whole water distribution system will have to run on subsidies that the public sector can ill afford.

What set off the President, apparently, was the decision handed down by the international arbitration court commanding the Philippine government to pay Manila Water over P7 billion for renegeing on the provisions of the concession contract. Maynilad earlier won its arbitration case where government was ordered to pay the concessionaire over P3 billion for the same reasons.

When the President ranted about the concessionaires turning a profit, he forgot that they were businesses. The concessionaires are now making only a little over seven percent from their huge investments. That is barely above fixed income investments. If they took their capital out of this highly regulated business and invested it elsewhere, they could make at least double the returns.

It is easy to demonize large corporations and, in doing so, overlook that some of them are actually in a business with lower returns on investment for patriotic reasons.

The day after the President ranted about the water concessionaires, their stock prices dropped substantially. Sometimes we forget that these corporations are actually listed companies reliant on the confidence of a large number of small investors in the viability of their businesses.

I recall a conversation I had with a technical adviser to one of the concessionaires. He recounted how he advised his principals to think about moving out of the water distribution business and investing their capital elsewhere. The water business is too politicized, he said. That makes observance of the terms of the concession contract vulnerable to political agitation.

True enough, both concessionaires had to run to the arbitration court to force government to observe the terms of the contract. Because the concessions are highly regulated, the concessionaires do not actually work to profit. They get what is called an "appropriate discount rate" (ADR) that is to be determined every five years. In the first years of privatization, the ADR stood at about 10.4%. The past few years, it has gone down to P7.39%.



If the concessionaires were not getting enough of a return, they would run into trouble with the banks that lend them money to invest in better distribution and the construction of a functioning sewerage for this overcrowded metropolis. Capital will dry up. Service will deteriorate.

When the President threatened to abrogate the concession contracts and rewrite them midstream, this sent worst signals to the investment community. Remember that among the major reasons we are not getting as much investments as the other economies in the region is the perception that contracts in this country are unreliable. Policy is constantly shifting. Large investments require long-term predictability.

Should the President rewrite the contracts in such a way that they make returns on investments unlikely, the concessionaires could cut losses by handing the concessions back to government. That will bring all of us back to the morbid conditions that forced us to privatize in the first place.

When government ran water distribution, water in the taps was unreliable to say the least. Many communities relied on water deliveries that cost many times more than the price of water that came through the taps. But there was no water coming through the taps.

In those bad old days, well over half of what was pumped out was "non-revenue water" — water lost to illegal connections and to leakages in the antiquated pipe system. Government heavily subsidized what was then called the National Waterworks and Sewerage Authority (Nawasa) but there was little water delivered and no sewerage service provided.

The first task of the concessionaires was to bring down the non-revenue water rate by providing water meters even to informal settlers and by replacing the badly damaged pipes (a lot of which of pre-war vintage). The undertaking required hundreds of billions in investment that was raised through borrowing and through market capitalization (selling stocks to the public).

This first task was especially challenging for the west zone where the engineering maps were destroyed during the war. It was a severe test of corporate capacity. The Lopez group gave up Maynilad and the concession was re-awarded to the consortium made up of Metro Pacific and DMCI.

The future is not very bright for the water distribution business. Since government neglected building new raw water sources, we are looking at shortages in the foreseeable future. There will not be enough water for the concessionaires to sell. Populist agitation is bound to intensify, making the business more prone to politicization.

If the concession contracts are cancelled arbitrarily, there will be panic in the business community. All the gains we made improving the ease of doing business will be cancelled.

Instead of terrorizing the concessions, it will be more constructive to work with them for better outcomes.



Villar, Zamora mining firm walang permit

Walang permit pero matagal nang nag-operate ang mining company na pag-aari ng mga Villar at Zamora sa Mindanao partikular sa Caraga region, ayon sa National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

Ibinunyag ni NCIP-Caraga Regional Director Ferdausi Sanila Cerna sa online news site Politiko (politics.com.ph) na kabilang ang Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (AMVI) ng mga Villar at ang Nickel Asia Corp. ng mga Zamora sa walong mining company na natuklasan nilang nag-operate nang walang Certification Precondition (CP).

Tinukoy rin ni Cerna ang iba pang mining company na walang CP at kabilang dito ang San Roque Metals Corporation (SRMI), Taganito Mining Corporation (TMC), Adnama Mining Resources Inc. (AMRI), Taganito HPAL Nickel Corporation (THPAL), Platinum Group Metals Corporation (PGMC), at Greenstone Mining.

Gayunman, may nakasalang umano na aplikasyon para sa CP ang SRMI, TMC, THPAL, PGMC, at Greenstone Mining.

Ayon kay Cerna, natuklasan nila ang ilegal na operasyon ng mga nabanggit na mining company nang humingi siya ng kopya ng kanilang memorandum of agreement (MOA) sa mga indigenous people sa Ancestral Domain Office ng NCIP sa Maynila.

Nabatid sa liham ni Atty. Michael Mamukid, bureau director ng NCIP Ancestral Domain Office, kay Cerna na napasakamay ng Politiko, na ang SRMI, TMC, THPAL, PGMC, at Greenstone Mining lamang ang may MOA sa mga indigenous people.

Nakasaad sa liham ni Mamukid na may petsang Oktubre 22, 2019 na hindi nag-apply para sa CP ang mga kompanya nina Villar at Zamora gayundin ang AMRI.

Sa ilalim ng Republic Act No. 8371 o The

Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997, hindi puwedeng mag-isyu ang anumang ahensya ng gobyerno ng concession, license o lease at hindi rin maaaring pumasok sa anumang production-sharing agreement, kung walang certification mula sa NCIP.

Nakasaad din na saka pa lamang puwedeng magbigay ng certification ang NCIP kapag naipabatid sa mga indigenous people o indigenous cultural community (ICC) ang usapin sa pamamagitan ng konsultasyon at may pagsang-ayon ang mga ito.

Puwede rin ipatigil o suspindehin ng mga indigenous people o ng ICC ang isang proyekto kapag hindi ito nakasunod sa kinakailangang konsultasyon bago gawin ang isang proyekto.

Binigyang-diin pa ni Cerna na kailangang kumuha ng CP ang mga mining company kahit mayroon na silang MOA sa mga indigenous people at ICC.

Paliwanag ni Cerna, isang katibayan ang CP na nagkaroon ng free and prior informed and written consent o FPIC). Hindi anyang puwedeng mag-operate ang isang aplikante kung walang CP.

Naniniwala si Cerna na kaya nakapag-operate ang mga nabanggit na mining company sa kabila ng kawalan ng CP dahil sa pakikipag-sabwatan umano sa ilang tiwaling opisyal ng NCIP ng nakaraang administrasyon.

"Just imagine how many years the mining firms have been getting away with not giving the IPs and government what they are due under the law. Some of them have been operating for decades without CP ani Cerna.

Sinabi pa nito na sumulat na siya sa AMVI hinggil sa paglabag nito sa RA 8371 at magpapadala rin siya ng liham sa iba pang mining company na natuklasan nilang nag-o-operate kahit walang permit.



UN climate talks aim to pave way for global carbon market

BERLIN—On a cold afternoon in late November, Jan Gerrit Otterpohl eyes the chimneys of Berlin's Heizkraftwerk Mitte, a state-of-the-art power plant that supplies the city with heat and electricity. It's not the billowing steam he's interested in, but the largely invisible carbon dioxide that the power station exhales as it burns natural gas.

Under European Union rules, the plant's operator, Vattenfall, needs a permit for each ton of carbon dioxide it emits. Otterpohl's job is to keep costs low by making sure the company buys only as many permits as necessary, at the current market price.

Economists say that carbon markets like the one Otterpohl uses can become a powerful tool in the fight against climate change, by giving emitters a financial incentive to reduce greenhouse gases. But despite making progress in other areas, governments have for years been unable to agree on the rules that would allow truly global trade in carbon permits to flourish.

Negotiators at a UN meeting in Madrid this month are aiming to finally tackle the issue, after last year agreeing on almost all other parts of the rule book governing the 2015 Paris climate accord. Observers said a fresh draft agreement circulated on Thursday was clearer than past versions, but major disagreements will likely be left to ministers arriving in the Spanish capital next week.

"There are reasons to be optimistic and to think that there could be some progress because of the political attention that it's getting," said Alex Hanafi, a lead counsel at the New York-based Environmental Defense Fund.

Many governments are struggling to make the emissions cuts necessary to meet the Paris accord's goal of keeping global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

The hope is that putting a price on carbon will unlock billions of dollars in investments as countries and companies seek the most cost-effective way to cut emissions. By capping the number of permits in the market and reducing it steadily, the incentive to save on emissions would grow over time.

"There is tremendous potential for carbon markets to contribute to the achievement of the Paris agreement goals," said Hanafi.

But he warned that a bad deal on carbon markets would be "worse than no deal at all."

That would be the case, for example, if a system currently being established by airlines to offset their emissions is linked to markets that sell questionable permits; or if countries protect large areas of carbon-absorbing forests, sell the resulting permits to other nations and simultaneously count them toward their own emissions-reduction efforts.

Brazil has long pushed back against some of the stricter accounting rules demanded by the EU and the United States. The Latin American nation, criticized by environmentalists for failing to properly protect the Amazon rainforest, also insists that it should be allowed to keep vast amounts of carbon credits amassed under a now-discredited system, a stance shared by China and India.

"It's very important to really avoid these kind of negative impacts," said Claudia Kemfert, a senior energy expert at the German Institute for Economic Research.

Kemfert noted that it took more than a decade to tweak the emissions trading system that so far only covers the power and heavy industry sectors in 27 European Union countries—all, except Britain—plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein—a region with well-functioning markets and low levels of corruption.

Otterpohl, who oversees emissions at Vattenfall's Berlin power plant, agreed.

"As far as the EU [emissions trading system] is concerned, there's now a mature and functioning market in the areas it covers."

Expanding that market to cover other sectors in the EU, such as transportation and home heating, or linking it up with other existing emissions trading systems in China, California and elsewhere should be possible, said Daniel Wragge, the director of political and regulatory affairs at the European Energy Exchange in Leipzig, Germany.

"Technically speaking, it's not a challenge," said Wragge, whose company manages the marketplace for European emissions, where a ton of carbon dioxide is currently traded for about €25 (\$27.70). "But, of course, there are certain conditions and the key is, of course, that the certificates are mutually recognized." AP



FILE:

PAGE 17

Massive floods hit Isabela, Cagayan

Heavy downpour triggers avalanche of rocks and mud that submerges at least 33 villages

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
@VillVisayaJRINQ

TUMAUINI, ISABELA—Torrential rains had spawned floodwaters that surged across the provinces of Isabela and Cagayan, submerging at least 33 villages where residents fled their homes for safety, local officials said.

The heavy downpour since Wednesday also triggered an avalanche of rocks and mud that buried roadsides in the several towns, making these impassable to motorists and causing a lockdown in Cagayan's capital city of Tuguegarao.

State of calamity

Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba on Friday placed the province under a state of calamity to tap disaster funds for

immediate relief operations.

Mamba said the massive flooding, which reached the roofs of houses in some villages, had displaced about 70,000 people who were now staying in temporary shelters.

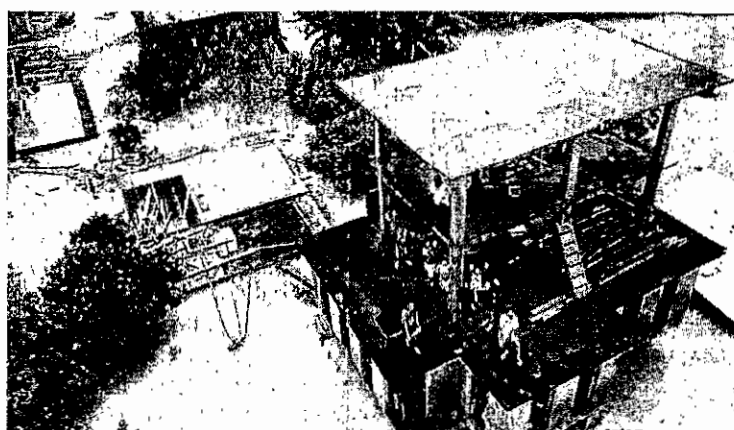
Logs from mountains

The Cagayan River serves as a catch basin of rainwater that cascades from the nearby provinces of Isabela, Apayao and Mountain Province.

Mamba said the river swelled due to the floodwater and burst its banks, submerging low-lying villages.

Flood-hit villagers trooped to water refilling stations as they ran out of potable water.

Large driftwood and logs washed up in farms and roads after mud and floodwater flowed from the mountains and forests.



SWAMPED Houses in Cagayan province are submerged in floodwater that has reached the roof of some houses. —JEZREEL LLAO/CONTRIBUTOR

The body of Domingo Bacani, a farmer who drowned in the flood at Barangay Lanna in Tumauni, was recovered on Friday. Police Capt. Frances Littaua,

Isabela police spokesperson, said search and rescue operations were ongoing for Hilario Bersamin, who went missing in flood-hit Barangay Santo To-

mas in the City of Ilagan.

Three roads and eight bridges in Sto. Tomas town, also in Isabela, remained submerged in floodwater, isolating the villages of Malapagay, Amugauan and San Rafael Abajo.

Over P900-M damage

Twenty six villages in Isabela remained without electricity.

The Department of Education (DepEd) said Typhoon "Tisoy" (international name: Kamuri), which battered the Bicol region from Monday to Tuesday, destroyed 240 classrooms and damaged 543 others.

Mayflor Jumamil, DepEd Bicol spokesperson, said the estimated cost for the destroyed classrooms was P600 million and the damaged classrooms was P272 million. She said they would need P7.4

million to clean and repair the classrooms.

DepEd officials in Bicol urged public schools to minimize their Christmas revelries to just simple bonding activities with the students instead of having food parties following the onslaught of Tisoy.

The island province of Marinduque was placed under a state of calamity, joining the list of other areas in Southern Luzon that suffered damage from Tisoy. Two fatalities were reported in the province.

In Palawan province, the body of a fisherman was found floating on Thursday in a river in Sofronio Española town. Police believed the man drowned at the height of the typhoon. —WITH REPORTS FROM MA. APRIL MIER-MANJARES, REY ANTHONY OSTRIA, MARICAR CINCO AND MADONNA VIROLA INQ