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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Nationwide ban on single-use plastic out soon—DENR exec

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is finalizing an order that will impose a nationwide ban on single-use plastics to help address the problem brought about by plastic pollution, officials said.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management Benny D. Antiporda said the DENR's Executive Committee (Execom) has yet to come up with a final decision.

"We will still discuss this at the Execom level," Antiporda, who also heads the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), said.

The DENR official said the order will be handed down soon by the DENR chief as part of the agency's ongoing efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay and some of the country's tourist spots which started last year in the world-renowned Boracay Island in the Municipality of Malay, Aklan province.

Ahead of the policy issuance prohibiting the use of single-use plastics, the DENR-Mimaropa region and the Municipality of Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro have recently signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) establishing the municipality as a local chapter of Tayo ang Kalikasan (TAK), the DENR's advocacy that aims to engage communities as partners in addressing issues and challenges on environmental protection.

The MOA signing held on December 7, 2019, coincided with the celebration of the 92nd Founding Anniversary of Puerto Galera. The MOA was signed and witnessed by national and local officials led by Puerto Galera Mayor Rocky Ilagan, Vice Mayor Marlon Lopez, and Oriental Mindoro Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Mary June Maypa and Provincial Environment Management Officer Ederlita Labre, representing DENR-Mimaropa Regional Executive Director Henry Adornado and Environmental Management Bureau-Mimaropa Regional Director Atty. Michael Drake Matias.

Along with its establishment as a TAK local chapter is the affirmation of the ban on single-use plastic.

In a news statement, Adornado said under the MOA, Puerto Galera shall strengthen strict enforcement of waste segregation at source and prohibition on the use of single-use/disposable plastics such as plastic bags, cups, straws, and stirrers which often end up polluting lands and seas.

"We are tasked to mainstream the campaign into our activities, hence, we ensure it is implemented not only in our offices but primarily in the region's top tourist destinations, such as Puerto Galera," Adornado said.

In December 2018, El Nido, another popular tourist spot in the Mimaropa region was launched as TAK local chapter to boost local solid waste management amid the ongoing rehabilitation in the island.

"This campaign is also in support to Secretary Roy Cimatu's pronouncement on a department order that would soon ban the use of single-use plastics nationwide," Adornado added.

To recall, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu announced that the DENR is in the process of finalizing an order that prohibits the use of single-use plastics as a measure to enhance solid waste management policies and address the alarming plastic pollution in the country.

The local government unit of Puerto Galera has already issued an ordinance regulating the use of single-use plastics, Adornado said. "Now that it is established as a TAK chapter, we look forward to forging a strengthened partnership to substantially reduce the volume of plastic wastes and eventually prevent it from polluting our marine environment," Adornado stressed. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



DENR wants public, stakeholders to help solve garbage crisis

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) admitted that the government alone cannot solve the garbage problem and called on stakeholders and the public to join hands in addressing the crisis.

Benny Antiporda, Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns, said Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu stressed that the country, particularly Metro Manila, "is in the middle of a garbage crisis" and will need a concerted effort among all sectors to solve it.

"Solid waste management is not the government's responsibility alone, it is everyone's business," Antiporda said.

Cimatu's declaration came amid government efforts to revive the heavily polluted Manila Bay, which is the repository of trash and untreated sewage from house-

holds and businesses in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

"We shouldn't wait for the time when there will be more trash than fish in the ocean," said Antiporda, noting the situation will get worse without the efforts of everybody.

Antiporda added that LGUs also play a crucial role in solid waste management having been tasked to ensure proper waste segregation and disposal under RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Under this law, LGUs are required to come up with their respective 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) and convert open dumpsites into sanitary landfills.

The NSWMC has already fast-tracked the approval of SWMPs of hundreds of LGUs nationwide, while the DENR closed down some open dumpsites and filed criminal and administrative charges against local officials allowing their operation.

Joel dela Torre



BROADCASTER'S **Single-use plastic ban ipatupad sa buong bansa**

VIEW



Ely Saludar

TWITTER @ElySaludar

Hindi na dapat panghintayin na magkaroon ng malawakang krisis sa basura sa

buong bansa bago kumilos ang ating gobyerno.

Mismong si Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ang nagbabala sa nalalapit na krisis sa basura sa bansa.

Kaya naman hinihikayat ni Cimatu ang mabilisan at drastikong pagbabago ng mga mamamayan sa pagtrato ng mga ito sa basura sa bansa.

Pero ayon sa pag-aaral ay ang mga single-use plastic

product ang isa sa pangunahing may kontribusyon sa problema ng basura sa bansa.

Sa Quezon City ay nagpahayag na ipatutupad sa pagpasok ng taong 2020 ang pagbabawal sa paggamit ng single-use plastic bilang tugon sa problema sa basura.

Mas makabubuting sa buong bansa na ipatupad ang single-use plastic ban upang mapigilan ang napintong krisis.

Sa ngayon ay may nakasalang na panukalang batas sa Kongreso para sa pagpapatupad ng single-use plastic ban pero inaasahan natin na maaantala ang pag-aaprubang dito.

Hindi naman lingid sa kaalaman ng lahat na tutol ang mga dambuhalang korporasyon sa single-use plastic ban dahil malaki ang epekto sa kita ng mga negosyante.

Malaki ang posibili-

dad na may mag-lobby sa Kongreso upang huwag makalusot ang panukalang batas sa single-use plastic ban dahil marami sa mga negosyante ay may koneksiyon sa ilang mga politiko.

Kaya mas makabubuting ang bawat lokal na pamahalaan sa pamamagitan ng ordinansa agad ipatupad sa buong bansa ang single-use plastic ban upang mapigilan ang krisis sa basura sa bansa.



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BANGON NA!



**Joel Reyes
Zobel**

TWITTER: @joelzobel

Sa ilalim ng Republic Act 9003 o ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, pinapatawan ng mula P300 hanggang P500,000 ang sinomang lalabag sa batas mula sa pag-ooperate ng open dumpsite, pag-manufacture at pag-import ng mga non-environmentally acceptable material at toxic waste.

Maaari ka ring makulong mula isang araw hanggang isang taon kapag lumabag sa batas laban sa pagtatapon ng basura.

Sa bansang Australia, ang parusa sa

mga indibidwal na mahuhuling iligal na nagtatapon ng basura ay umaabot ng hanggang P500,000 Australian dollars at kulong na hanggang apat na taon. Kapag korporasyon ang lumabag, hanggang \$2 million ang multa.

Matindi ang pagpapahalaga ng gobyerno ng Australia laban sa pagtatapon ng basura dahil nagiging health risk ito at malaki rin ang ginagastos ng gobyerno sa paglilinis ng mga basurang iresponsableng dinis-patsa.

Kung ikukumpara natin sa Australia, malama ang batas sa Pilipinas na nagpaparusa sa mga salaula. Baka kailangan muling silipin ang batas kaugnay ng solid waste management at magpataw ng mas mabigat na parusa.

Kapag muling pinag-aralan, atangan na rin ng responsibilidad ng

pamahalaan ang mga barangay official na siyang dapat sumuheto sa kanyang nasasakupan at tiyakin na nakasusunod sa mga panuntunan ang kanilang komunidad. Ang barangay ang first line of defense. Malaking bulto ng basura ay dinidis-patsa ng mga informal settler, mga iskuwarter. Kapag merong salaula na nahuli, papanagutin din si kapitan para matiyak na hindi na ito mangyayaring muli.

Malaki na ang ginagastos ng gobyerno sa mga informal settler. Maliban sa conditional cash transfer, relocation site para mabigyan sila ng disentang pabahay, pati basurang iresponsableng itinatapon nila ay ginagastusan ng gobyerno para haku-tin at linisin.

Kadalasan nasasalanta ng mga pagbaha dahil sa mga basurang bumabara

sa mga estero ay ang mga taxpayer na nagbibigay ng subsidiya sa kanila. Baka naman puwedeng maki-usap sa inyo si Juan Pasan Cruz, huwag niyo namang salaulain ang kapaligiran para patuloy kayong masustentuhan ni Juan.

Mas mabigat na parusa ang ipataw sa malalaking kompanya na walang waste water management facility. Mga importer ng basura ng ibang bansa na inaangkat para lang sila ay kumita ng pera at ang bansa ay maperwisyo. Sa ngayon, P10,000 hanggang P500,000 lamang ang multa. Ang malakihang pagtatapon ng basura ay dapat na ituring na heinous crime.

Meron nang maitinding pangangailangan para protektahan ang kalikasan. Kinakapos na tayo ng supply ng tubig. Hindi natin lubusang

mapakinabangan ang ating mga bukal dahil malaki ang posibilidad na kontaminado na ito ng katas ng mga basurang walang pakundangan nating itinatapon. Ang yelo sa mga malalamig na lugar ay unti-unting natutunaw. By 2025, nasa 25 metro ang tinatayang itataas ng tubig sa karagatan. Huwag na nating dagdagan ng basurang babara sa ating mga kanal ang hindi na maiiwasang problema na mabura sa mapa ang mga mababang lugar.

Merong kasabihan na nasa huli ang pagsisisi. Gustuhin man natin o hindi, ang pagpapahalaga sa environmental protection ay isang bagay na hindi na natin maiiwasan. It's now or never. Kung hindi mo ito pipiliin, literal ka nang magbilang ng panahon ng itatagal ng sangkatauhan sa mundo.

Garbage crisis



Cagayan, Isabela floods death toll hits 7

By RAYMUND CATINDIG

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan – The death toll due to flooding in Isabela and Cagayan since last week has increased to seven.

The bodies of Rick Mar Serame, 30, and Mario Parandit, who drowned in Barangay Allasitan and Bidduang, respectively, in Pamplona, Cagayan were recovered on Sunday, town police chief Capt. Joel Labasan said.

On Saturday, the body of farmer Hilario Bersamin, 63, who was swept away by floodwaters, was recovered in a corn field in Barangay Sto. Tomas.

Three others drowned in flashfloods in Tumauni and Ilagan City in Isabela and Linao, Aparri.

Rosendo Calayan, 71, was gored to death by his carabao when he tried to pull the animal to a higher ground in Barangay Linao Norte in this city.

Authorities said a four-

year-old boy who was trapped in his house that was buried in a landslide in Barangay Kalayukay, Luna, Apayao on Thursday also remains missing.

Thousands remain in evacuation centers in Cagayan and Isabela.

Not due to illegal logging

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the flashfloods in Cagayan and Isabela were not due to illegal logging.

"There is no evidence of freshly cut or illegally cut trees. These are trees damaged in previous strong typhoons that hit the region," DENR-Cagayan Valley regional director Antonio Abawag said, referring to

logs and trees swept away by floodwaters.

Abawag said the DENR is conducting an inventory of these logs and uprooted trees.

He said the Regional Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force has intensified its campaign against forest destruction in coordination with police and military personnel.

Abawag said they would investigate those behind illegal logging in the region.

Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba had earlier said illegal logging thrives in his province because it has the blessing of local government, police and DENR officials.

Still cloudy with rains

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said the massive flooding was due to heavy rains spawned by the northeast monsoon and tail-end of a cold front.

Cagayan Valley, the Cordilleras and Ilocos will continue to have cloudy skies with light rains and gusty winds due to the northeast monsoon, the state weather bureau said yesterday.

PAGASA said residents of Bicol and Northern Samar should brace for flooding and landslides due to heavy rains from the tail-end of a cold front.

Bicol and Northern Samar were among those badly hit by Typhoon Tisoy, the strongest cyclone to hit the country this year, which left 17 people dead.

No low-pressure area or tropical cyclone is expected to enter the Philippine area of responsibility in the next three days, PAGASA weather forecaster Meno Mendoza said.

A total of 20 cyclones entered the Philippines this year. One more cyclone was forecast to enter the country this month. — **With Helen Flores, Victor Martin**



No evidence of illegal logging in Cagayan Valley—DENR exec

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

AN official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Monday said the flooding in Cagayan and Isabela provinces early this month cannot be blamed to illegal logging activities.

Antonio A. Abawag, DENR regional executive director in the Cagayan Valley, said based on the assessment made by the DENR which he personally led, there's no evidence of new or freshly cut, or illegally cut trees in the area, even as piles of driftwood were seen floating along with other debris in the floodwaters in the City of Ilagan in Isabela during the flood after heavy rains brought about by the northeast monsoon.

"There is no evidence of freshly cut or illegally cut trees," Abawag said.

The driftwood, he said, are damaged uprooted shrubs and swept down hill from the mountains and forests in the City of Ilagan.

"These are previously damaged trees probably due to the strong typhoons that hit Region 2 before," the top DENR official in the Cagayan Valley said.

Abawag said the Regional Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force (RAILTF) has intensified the campaign against forest destruction in Region 2, being a transshipment point of illegal forest products, and has been successful in doing so.

Earlier, Abawag ordered the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officers to closely coordinate with the battalion and unit commanders of the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police in conducting anti-illegal logging operations.

The DENR is now conducting an inventory of the uprooted and drifted logs and has requested the assistance of local officials in the provinces of Isabela and Cagayan to determine the volume of drifted logs that are stockpiled, especially within private lands in Barangays Marana Second and Allinguigan second, both in the City of Ilagan.



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Flooding not caused by illegal logging - DENR

TUGUEGARAO CITY: Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) have belied reports that illegal logging caused last week's massive flooding in Cagayan and Isabela provinces.

Antonio Abawag, DENR Region 2 executive director, said the reports came out after piles of driftwood were seen floating in flooded Ilagan City in Isabela.

"There is no evidence of freshly cut or illegally cut trees," Abawag noted in a statement.

He said the widespread flooding in the two provinces was caused by continuous heavy rains brought about by the northeast monsoon, not illegal logging.

According to Abawag, he led the DENR Region 2 in immediately conducting an assessment as soon as he learned of the reports.

"We found out that there were no illegally cut logs. What we have seen were driftwood that were damaged uprooted shrubs and dead woods brought down from the mountains forests by the heavy flooding in the City of

Ilagan," he said.

"These were previously damaged trees probably [by] strong typhoons in the past that hit the region," Abawag added.

He said the DENR was now conducting inventory of the uprooted and drifted logs.

"We have requested the assistance of local officials in the provinces of Isabela and Cagayan to determine the volume of drifted logs that are stockpiled especially within private lands in the *barangay* (villages) of Marana 2nd and Alinguigan 2nd, both in the City

of Ilagan," Abawag added.

He said the Regional Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force has been successful in its intensified campaign against forest destruction in Region 2, a transshipment point of illegal forest products.

Abawag added that he earlier ordered the Provincial and Community Environment and Natural Resources Officers to closely coordinate with the battalion and unit commanders of the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police in operations against illegal loggers. **LEANDER C. DOMINGO**



72-10-10

FILE:

Commuters can avail themselves of free rides at the Pasig River ferry, which was relaunched yesterday at the Lawton station in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

EDD GUMBAN



Pasig River ferry service relaunched

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) relaunched yesterday the rehabilitated Pasig River ferry service, increasing its fleet to seven passenger boats to accommodate more commuters wanting to escape the monstrous road traffic in the metropolis.

Present during the relaunching at the Lawton station were Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim, Mayors Isko Moreno and Vico Sotto of Manila and Pasig, respectively, Sen. Bong Go, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Pasig Rep. Roman Romulo.

The MMDA kicked off the relaunching of the ferry transportation program with free rides until Jan. 31 next year.

Go said the Senate would find a way to increase the MMDA's budget to extend the free rides until end of 2020.

Lim said the free rides seek to entice commuters to take the ferry service instead of public utility vehicles along Metro Manila roads.

Commuters will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis.

The ferry transport system was launched in 2014 and a phone app was unveiled last year to further promote the ferry service.

But the rehabilitation and full operations of the transport system were delayed due to budgetary constraints.

Lim said with the renewed support from Malacañang, the MMDA rehabilitated the ferry stations, with a plan to build additional stations at the Quinta Market in Manila, Circuit Makati in Makati and

Kalawaan in Pasig.

The MMDA also plans to engage the private sector to purchase more passenger boats.

The ferry service has 11 stations spanning the 25-kilometer Pasig River: Escolta, Lawton, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Sta. Ana and Lambingan stations in Manila; Pinagbuhatan, San Joaquin and Maybunga stations in Pasig; Valenzuela and Guadalupe stations in Makati, and Hulo station in Mandaluyong.

The local government of Pasig donated two new ferry boats that were added to the existing Pasig River ferry service fleet. The two boats, named *M/B Mutya ng Pasig 1* and *M/B Mutya ng Pasig 2*, can carry 57 passengers each.

MMDA general manager Garcia said the ferry service can accommodate up to 14,000 passengers, and could decongest traffic along EDSA and other major thoroughfares by providing an alternative mode of transport.

The MMDA also installed closed-circuit television cameras on the boats and distributed radio equipment to the ferry personnel in case of emergencies.

Metro Manila mayors vowed to support the ferry service so it can become an alternative transportation for commuters.

Moreno and Sotto said commuters can now access Pasig and Manila in a short time without riding in a bus, jeep or the Light Rail Transit.

Moreno also vowed to donate two more ferry boats. — Marc Jayson Cayabyab, Rey Galupo



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The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority relaunched the rehabilitated Pasig river ferry service yesterday, increasing its fleet to seven passenger boats to accommodate commuters hoping to escape the heavy road traffic. Joining MMDA chairman Danilo Lim and GM Jojo Garcia during the launch were DOTr Secretary Arthur Tugade, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, Sen. Bong Go, Pasig Rep. Roman Romulo, Pasig Mayor Vico Sotto and Manila Mayor Isko Moreno. Story on Page 12. EDD GUMBAN



PASIG RIVER FERRY REVIVED — Officials attend the relaunching of the newly rehabilitated Pasig River Ferry Service yesterday, Dec. 9. Among them were Sen. Christopher Go, MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, DOTr Secretary Arthur Tugade, Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, MMDA General Manager Jojo Garcia, Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto, and PACC Commissioner Greco Belgica. (Ali Vicoy)

MMDA revives Pasig River Ferry Service

By DHEL NAZARIO

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) reactivated the 25-kilometer Pasig River Ferry Service (PRFS) on Monday as an alternative means of transportation to help ease the traffic congestion in the metro.

MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim said that there is no better time than now to see how the Pasig River can alleviate the traffic woes of commuters.

The PRFS will be offering free rides for the month of December. Commuters will be accommodated on **▶7**

MMDA revives Pasig...

1 ◀

a first come, first served basis and will operate from 6 a.m. up to 6 p.m. during weekdays.

Lim said the free transport hopes to encourage the public to patronize the ferry service over public utility vehicles and avoid the inconvenience of commuting in congested Metro Manila roads.

He thanked the local chief executives of Metro Manila for their support for the project especially Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto who provided two new ferry boats that are now part of the service.

The PRFS currently has seven boats with varying carrying capacities. Two of the boats can ferry up to 57 passengers, while three other boats can ferry 36 passengers. Two ferry boats can accommodate 16 passengers.

The Pasig-Manila ferry service has 11 stations: Pinagbuhatan, San Joaquin and Maybunga in Pasig; Guadalupe and Valenzuela in Makati; Hulo in Mandaluyong; and Lambingan, Sta. Ana, PUP, Lawton, and Escolta in Manila.

Stations are fully-equipped with comfortable seats, convenient restrooms, free Internet connectivity for passengers waiting for rides.

"Expect better services with additional safe and speedy boats, rehabilitated ferry stations and additional personnel," Lim said.

The agency revealed that there is also a plan to further expand the services of the PRFS by constructing more stations in Quinta Market in Manila; Circuit Makati in Makati; and Kalawaan

in Pasig.

Patronize river ferry

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno encouraged the city residents to patronize the revived Pasig River Ferry Service saying it is "cheaper than taking UV express."

"Cost and certainty [are the most important factors to keep people from using this]," Moreno said in an interview after a re-launching ceremony at the Lawton Station in Manila Monday.

"When you say, the boat will depart at 7:30, it will depart at 7:30," he added. "In a matter of 20 minutes, you can go from the east side of Metro Manila to the west side."

Moreno assured the city government's support through maintaining "cleanliness and orderliness."

"We are grateful in our own little ways. We try at the very least to implement basic law in the city of Manila, and part of these is cleanliness and orderliness," the city mayor said.

"Alam niyo po, ang Manila po ay puntahan ng ng enterprising individuals from all across the boards," he added. "Tama ang naisip ng Pangulo to maximize and utilize the waterways," he noted.

Moreno also offered MMDA and the Department of Transportation the stretch of Roxas Boulevard that could house public utility vehicle terminals for commuters going to and from Cavite province.

"I don't want the Roxas Boulevard to be constructed of unnecessary stops," he said, "Gusto ko tuloy-tuloy." (With a report from Joseph Almer Pedrajas)



MMDA relaunches Pasig River Ferry Service to ease Metro traffic congestion

BY CLAUDETH MOCON-CIRIACO
Correspondent

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) on Monday relaunched the Pasig River Ferry Service (PRFS) in a bid to ease traffic congestion, especially during the holiday rush.

MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim also said that the agency will be giving free rides from December 9, 2019, until January 31, 2020, as previously directed by President Duterte.

Lim was joined by Sen. Bong Go during the relaunch ceremony at the Lawton Station in Manila, on Monday.

"The Pasig River ferry service has been an alternative mode of transport to Metro Manila commuters who want to avoid traveling the busy streets of Metro Manila. They can enjoy ferry rides between Pasig City and Manila City, for free until the end of January," said Lim.

For his part Go said, "With the government's collective effort and President Duterte's order, Pasig River is now clean from floating garbage so aside from the ferry service being an alternative mode of transport, commuters can now enjoy the beauty of

the river while on cruise."

Go also proposed and encouraged concerned government officials to find ways and source funds for the ferry rides to be free of charge until the end of 2020.

The senator also said that the renewed beauty of the 25-kilometer river will attract more ferry service passengers.

According to Lim, the free ferry transportation program hopes to encourage the public to patronize the ferry service over public-utility vehicles and avoid the hassle of commuting in congested Metro Manila roads.

Commuters will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis.

In preparation for the relaunch, Lim ordered the refurbishment of ferry stations and the sourcing of additional boats to further serve passengers better.

"Expect better services with additional safe and speedy boats, rehabilitated ferry stations and additional personnel," said Lim.

Lim also thanked the local chief executives of Metro Manila for their support for the project, especially Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto who provided two newly procured ferry boats

which are now part of the PRFS fleet.

"I would like to specially thank the local government of Pasig for lending two passenger boats for the use of the ferry service, and to Mayor Vico Sotto, who has been very supportive with this endeavor in providing alternative transport options to Metro Manilans," Lim said.

He also added that "though the river ferry service still needs a lot of work, these efforts have given government the needed institutional knowledge and experience in turning this river ferry service into a viable transport alternative."

The Pasig River ferry service now has seven boats that can accommodate varying number of passengers.

- two boats can accommodate 57 passengers;
- three boats can accommodate 36 passengers; and
- two boats can accommodate 16 passengers.

All ferry stations boast of comfortable seats, convenient rest rooms and free Wi-fi connectivity for passengers waiting for their rides.

The MMDA also installed CCTV cameras to ensure the safety of the passengers and distributed radio

equipment for concerned personnel for emergency purposes.

"Stations are important elements in the operation of the ferry service. We commit to provide safe and convenient travel to the passengers," said Lim.

Further, Pasig ferry personnel have undergone a refresher course in first aid to ensure the safety of the passengers during emergencies.

The ferry service runs from Pinagbuhatan in Pasig City to Escolta in Manila, with 11 stations:

Stations in Pasig City: Pinagbuhatan, San Joaquin and Maybunga; Stations in Makati City: Guadalupe, Valenzuela; Station in Mandaluyong City: Hulo; Stations in Manila City: Lambingan, Santa Ana, PUP, Lawton and Escolta.

To further expand the operations and cater to more passengers, plans are afoot to construct three more ferry stations, namely: Quinta Market in Manila, Circuit Makati in Makati, and Kalawaan in Pasig.

The revival of the PRFS is in line with President Duterte's order to address the traffic problem in Metro Manila. The ferry service first sailed last 2014 to serve also as an alternative to congested roads in metropolis.



#nationataglance



VICO SOTTO FB PAGE

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: PASIG AND MANILA

Pasig River ferry back in operation, free rides until Jan. 31

THE PASIG River Ferry Services is back in operation, providing an alternative mode of transport between the cities of Pasig and Manila. Trips on the ferry will be for free, on a first come-first served basis, until January 31, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Danilo D. Lim. "Expect better services with additional safe and speedy boats, rehabilitated ferry stations and additional personnel," Mr. Lim said in a statement after the relaunching ceremony on Monday in partnership with the Department of Transportation. The ferry service, managed by the MMDA, will have seven different-sized boats that can accommodate a maximum of 16, 36, and 57 passengers. Transportation Secretary Arthur P. Tugade, in a statement, said the revival of the water transport service improves the people's "mobility at (and) connectivity," and most importantly, helps decongest Metro Manila's roads.

GOOD START

The ceremony was also attended by Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, and Victor "Vico" N. Sotto. The Pasig City government owns two of the 57-seater boats that will be part of the fleet. Mr. Sotto, in a post on his official Facebook page, said: "*Ang trapik at kakulangan sa mobilidad ay mabibigyan lang ng solusyon kung nagtutulongan ang mga lokal na pamahalaan sa mga nasyonal na ahensiya. Magandang simula ito* (Traffic and lack of mobility can only be solved if local governments and national agencies work together. This is a good start)." The government also launched last Sunday a ferry service between Cavite and Metro Manila. It will operate to and from the Metrostar Ferry Terminal in Cavite City to the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Port in Pasay City. Another route will be operated from the Metrostar Ferry Terminal to Lawton (Liwasang Bonifacio) in Manila and vice versa. —
Arjay L. Ballinbin



Pasig River Ferry Service relaunched by MMDA

By **EDD REYES**

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) relaunched its Pasig River Ferry Service (PRFS) with free ride offer until January 31, 2020 yesterday morning in Manila's Lawton.

Senator Bong Go, MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim, Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Arthur Tugade, Department of Environment Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu and Manila Mayor Isko Moreno were present during the ceremony at 10 a.m.

"The Pasig River ferry service has been an alternative mode of transport for Metro Manila commuters who want to avoid the busy streets of Metro Manila.



Lim

They can enjoy ferry rides between Pasig City and Manila for free until the end of January," said Lim.

"With the government's collective effort and President Duterte's order, Pasig River is now clean from floating garbage so aside from the ferry service being an



Isko

alternative mode of transport, commuters can now enjoy the beauty of the river while on cruise," Go added.

Go encouraged the concerned government officials to find ways and source funds for it to be free until the end of 2020. He added that the renewed beauty of

the 25-kilometer river will attract more ferry service passengers.

According to Lim, the free ferry transportation program hopes to encourage the public to patronize the ferry service over public utility vehicles and avoid the hassles of commuting in congested Metro Manila roads. Commuters will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis.

In preparation for the re-launch, Lim ordered the refurbishment of ferry stations and the sourcing of additional boats to further serve passengers better.

Lim also thanked the local chief executives of Metro Manila for their support to the project, especially Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto who provided two newly procured ferry boats which are now part of the PRFS fleet.



Cavite-Manila ferry service launched

By **JUN I. LEGASPI**

RESIDENTS of Cavite may now reach Metro Manila faster by water travel, as the Department of Transportation (DOTr), through the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and with the help of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) formally launched the Cavite - Manila Ferry Service last Sunday, December 8, 2019.

At the inaugural ceremony, DOTr Secretary Arthur Tugade announced that starting yesterday

passengers may start using the ferry service from the Cavite City Port Terminal going to the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Complex in Pasay City, and to the Liwasang Bonifacio Terminal (Plaza Lawton) in Manila, and vice versa.

"Andito kami ngayon pagka't hangarin namin na ilunsad at i-revive ang ferry operation ng Cavite. Itong operation ng Cavite ay matagal ding nawala, matagal ding nakalimutan, kaya sabi namin, umpisahan, buhayin, at itaguyod ulit 'yung ferry operation ng Cavite," said Tugade.

The transportation chief

also announced more good news: the riding public will get to avail of the ferry service for free until 9 January 2020, in coordination with Shogun Ships Co. Inc. and Seaborne Shipping Company Inc.

"Kausap ko 'yung Shogun, Seaborne, ang sabi ko, 'itong proyektong ito, gusto ko Pamaskong handog sa mga Caviteño, dapat ito libre. Hanggang matapos ang Kapaskuhan sa January 9, libre ang pamasaha sa ferry. Ito 'yung pamaskong handog ng administrasyong Duterte sa inyo,' added Tugade.

Immediately following the launch, the ferry service kicked off its operations

with an inaugural voyage from the Cavite City Port Terminal to the Liwasang Bonifacio Terminal (Lawton) in Manila. Upon arrival, it was announced that passengers who will ride the "MV Island Sabtang" will get free rides until 31 January 2020.

Two vessels will start operating tomorrow, with two to three more to be added next month to serve the routes.

Through the ferry service, travel time from Cavite City Port Terminal to Liwasang Bonifacio Terminal is estimated at 40 to 45 minutes. Meanwhile, travel time between the Cavite City Port Terminal and

CCP, and vice versa, is around 15 minutes.

MV Island Sabtang from Shogun Ships Co. Inc. can accommodate 57 passengers, while MB Seaborne Mercury can accommodate 27 passengers. Fares for both rides are still under negotiation, as Secretary Tugade continues to push for lower prices.

For his part, Cavite City Mayor Bernardo Paredes thanked the DOTr and its attached agencies under the maritime sector for initiating the ferry service in a bid to help ease road traffic to and from Metro Manila.

"Sa ngalan ng ating pamahalaan at mamamayan ng ating siyudad, ang inyo pong lingkod ay lubos na nagagalak at nagpapasalamat sa inyong presensya upang matungha-

an ang opisyal na pagbu-
kas ng Cavite-Manila
erry Service. Ang nasab-
ing proyekto ay makapag-
bibigay ng alternatibong
pamamaraan ng transpor-
tasyon na tutugon sa ating
kasalukuyang suliranin sa
trapiko, na bago tayo
makarating sa Metro Ma-
nila ay mag-uubos tayo ng
mga 2-3 oras, ngayon, mga
40 minutes na lang," May-
or Paredes said.

The Cavite - Manila Ferry Service is an offshoot of the "water jeepney" concept that was developed in Cebu, and was announced during the operational dry run of the Sangley Airport in Cavite. Secretary Tugade hopes that the riding public will utilize the service, as it offers a quick, convenient, and comfortable mode of transportation.



Pasig River ferry service revived

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) reactivated Monday the Pasig River Ferry Service (PRFS) as an alternative means of transportation that can help ease the traffic congestion in the metropolis.

MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim said that there is no better time than now to see how the Pasig River can alleviate the ongoing traffic woes experienced by commuters.

The PRFS is offering free rides for the month of December, and it operates from 6 a.m. up to 6 p.m. during weekdays.

Lim said that the free transportation service hopes to encourage the public to patronize the ferry service over public utility vehicles and avoid the hassles of commuting in congested Metro Manila roads.

He thanked the local chief executives of Metro Manila for their

support to the project, especially Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto who provided two new ferry boats that are now part of the service.

The PRFS currently has seven boats with varying carrying capacities. Two of the boats can ferry up to 57 passengers, three boats with 36 passengers, and two boats with 16 passengers.

The ferry service runs from Pinagbuhatan in Pasig City to Escolta in Manila with 11 stations.

Stations in Pasig City are Pinagbuhatan, San Joaquin and Maybunga. Makati City has stations in Guadalupe and Valenzuela. Mandaluyong has one station in Hulo.

Stations in Manila are Sta. Ana, PUP, Lawton, and Escolta.

Stations are fully-equipped with comfortable seats, convenient restrooms and free internet connectivity for passengers waiting for rides. **(Dhel Nazario)**



GOVERNMENT officials lead the reactivation of the rehabilitated Pasig River Ferry Service (PRFS) with free ride offer for a month. The PRFS is expected to ease traffic congestion in Metro Manila. (Ali Vicoy)



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Dumalo sina Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, Transport Secretary Arthur P. Tugade at Pasig Mayor Vico Sotto sa muling pagpapasinaya sa Pasig River Ferry Services sa Lawton Ferry station na bibiyahe sa dalawang lungsod na layong mahawasan ang traffic sa lansangan. (Jonas Sullit)



DATI, tatlong oras ang biyahe mula Cavite hanggang Plaza Lawton sa Maynila kaya inilunsad na ng Department of Transportation (DOTr) ang pamaskong handog na libre ang sakay sa mga kompyuter ng Pasig River Ferry jeep na 15 minuto na lamang ang biyahe mula sa nabanggut na ruta kung by land. Saan ka pa? (Jun Guillermo)



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MULING bumiyahе ang Pasig River Ferry sa relaunching nito kahapon sa Lawton Ferry Terminal sa Maynila. Ang bagong river taxi ay bibiyahе mula Lawton hanggang sa Pasig City. **Kuha ni NORMAN ARAGA**



Mishandling of Kaliwa Dam consultation hit

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Leaders of indigenous groups whose ancestral lands would be affected by the P18.7-billion Kaliwa Dam project slammed the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for their alleged violations in the process of obtaining the indigenous peoples' (IPs) free prior and informed consent (FPIC).

The grievances of the leaders of the Agta-Dumagat-Remontado tribes from the provinces of Rizal and Quezon spilled during a high-level case conference initiated by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on Monday.

The discussion, which was also attended by representa-

tives of national and local government units and agencies, was among the first activities with the official creation of an interagency monitoring forum led by the CHR to oversee and probe reports of violations of human rights and indigenous rights surrounding the controversial project.

Tribal leaders denounced the supposed irregularities in the public hearings and consultations, decrying that the NCIP appeared to work for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), the project's main proponent.

Representatives from the NCIP were a no-show at the conference, despite an invitation extended by the CHR.

"The objections raised by indigenous peoples were wasted, because the field reports of the FPIC were all lies," said Conchita Calzado, a tribal leader from General Nakar, Quezon province.

She decried the violations in the guidelines that were stipulated in the process, such as meeting the required number of households for the consent gathering.

Calzado said even nonindigenous peoples were reportedly made to sign in on the document.

The leaders also slammed the false information surrounding the project, such as the reported success of the public hearings and even the declared number of households that

would be affected by the dam's construction.

"Instead of the NCIP protecting us, we have already lost hope with them," said Marcelino Tena, a Dumagat leader also from General Nakar.

Tena and several other representatives also condemned the Red-tagging done by government forces to those who would voice out their opposition for the project.

CHR Commissioner Gwendolyn Pimentel-Gana said such reports were the reason behind the formation of the interagency monitoring group.

Pimentel-Gana said that once all the reports and concerns had been gathered, the CHR would come up with recommendations, which would

be brought to proper government agencies.

"We monitored [the case] and we decided that this is really a grave concern for human rights," she said in an interview. "They are trying to actually create a scenario where the right to water of people in Metro Manila [are pitted] against the rights of the IPs to their ancestral domain, to their right to self-determination."

Pimentel-Gana, the focal commissioner on indigenous peoples' rights, reminded concerned government agencies to follow the process already laid down by the law.

"[They] just have to follow that to the letter and sincerely do it," she said. "How can the IPs have informed consent if

they don't know the issue at all?"

Even in its planning stage, the multibillion-peso project has been hounded by criticism from indigenous communities and environmental groups for the anticipated devastating impact of the dam to the environment and to ancestral lands and cultural identity of indigenous groups.

Critics have also scored it for being onerous, as it is among the Duterte administration's big-ticket projects that would be completed with loans from Beijing.

Amid stiff resistance, the Environmental Management Bureau issued an environmental compliance certificate for the project in October. INQ



Gov't can ignore extended concession deal with Manila Water, Maynilad - Pimentel

By MARIO B CASAYURAN

Senator Aquilino Pimentel III on Monday said the Duterte administration can disregard the extended life of the concession agreement signed by Manila Water and



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Maynilad since the extension, signed during the Arroyo administration, was done in the middle of the life of the original contract that is scheduled to expire in 2022.

Pimentel, a bar topnotcher, said the Arroyo administration could not tie the hands of President Duterte when it extended the life of the two water concession contracts up to 2037.

The senator, however, did not disclose any basis why the government can disregard the deal agreement to extend the concession deal until 2037.

"We are still under the regime of the original contract," Pimentel said, without elaborating.

Since a suit against the present concessionaires may take years before it could be settled, the Duterte administration can now begin drafting strict terms of a contract for new bidders, including Maynilad and Manila Water, to be bid out in 2022.

Pimentel, a bar topnotcher, said the search for new concessionaires would begin in 2020, 2021, 2022 "and announce early the terms of the new concession agreement including standards, fees, etc, the mechanics, arrangement, grievance procedure, announce early then open up the application or the search for the new concessionaires."

Earlier, Maynilad and Manila Water appealed the ₱2-billion fines imposed against them by the Supreme Court for violating the Clean Water Act.

Maynilad had warned of chaotic

traffic and high water rates if the High Tribunal would not reconsider its ruling.

It maintained that it would be "legally and physical impossible" to comply with the Supreme Court's directive to provide wastewater treatment facilities and to connect sewage lines in all establishments, including households a sewerage system within a five-year period.

Through its lawyers, Maynilad asked the SC to set aside its August decision directing it, along with Manila Water, to pay the ₱2-billion fine for violation of a provision of Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

The said provision requires MWSS and the two concessionaires to provide wastewater treatment facilities and to connect sewage lines in all establishments, including households, to an available sewerage system within five years upon the effectivity of RA 9275 on March 6, 2004.

President Duterte had earlier ordered the Justice department and Office of the Solicitor General to craft new water concession agreements more "favorable" to the public compared to the current deals with Manila Water and Maynilad

Duterte also ordered the filing of criminal, civil, and administrative charges against "all those involved" in the concession agreements of Manila Water and Maynilad with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), a government corporation.

The charges would cover the owners of the water concessionaires, their "agents," and even government lawyers who helped craft the alleged one-sided deals.

"It is apparent that some members of the government have not only looked the other way, but have in fact purposely guided the hands of those who have raped our economy for their own personal aggrandizement," Malacañang spokesman Salvador Panelo said recently.

Ready for takeover

Meanwhile, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra has assured that the government is ready to take over the water supply duties for Metro Manila in the event the two water concessionaires decide halt its services.

"The government will have to take over if necessary," he told reporters as the government is dead set to revise its current deals with water concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad.

But Guevarra doesn't believe that the situation will reach the point where the government will take over the water supply services for the metro.

"This is a problem that can be solved. I don't have any reason to believe that we should be worried of stoppage of water supply," he assured.

"Unless and until the government is ready to efficiently run the distribution business, I guess for now, we still have to rely on private concessionaires for the distribution of water supply," he pointed out.

The government has sought to revise its deals with the two water



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cessionaires after the Department of Justice (DOJ) found at least a dozen onerous provisions in the 1997 water concession agreements.

The agreement itself marami namang okay na provisions (there are many okay provisions). It's just a matter of weeding out yung mga provisions which can be considered as onerous or highly disadvantageous," he noted.

He disclosed that a team will draft a new version of the concession agreement. The team will be composed of lawyers from the DOJ, Department of Finance (DOF), Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), and Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC).

"So we'll hopefully come up with a revised version of the water concession agreement that does not include the onerous and what is considered illegal provisions," he said.

"Once we are ready with our own

version of what a good water concession agreement should be, that's the time we will sit down with the water concessionaires," he added.

Guevarra also said that the OSG is looking for remedies to address the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Singapore in favor of Manila Water which ordered the Philippine government to pay the company P7.39 billion, which represent losses from June 1, 2015 to November 22, 2019 when the water concessionaire was not allowed to have water price hikes.

Guevarra said that the OSG is looking into the possibility of appealing the ruling before the Singapore high court.

"Ang mas mahalaga kasi (what is more important) is not how to deal with their decision but what is more important is how we deal with the concession agreement itself," he pointed out. (With a report from Jeffrey G. Damicog)



By Hananeel Bordey
@tribuneph1_hana

President Rodrigo Duterte will not enter into any compromise with the Ayala-owned Manila Water Company Inc. that is servicing over six million people in the East Zone of Metro Manila, telling newly-promoted military officials on Monday that he will not surrender the country's

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No deal, Rody tells water firms

If there are those who believe that money and profit are more important than the lives of Filipinos – who we have vowed to serve and whose rights we have pledged to protect – we will be standing on different sides this time

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sovereignty to the big capitalists like two presidents before him did.

The Chief Executive also disclosed before the AFP officials that he had received feelers from the company, which he said is seeking to meet with him to iron out the lopsided deals that favor the water firms.

"You know, they said let's agree on a compromise. No, that's the money of the people," Duterte said, referring to the P7.4-billion compensation a Singapore arbitration court had ordered the Philippine government to pay Manila Water recently.

The amount is supposed to cover for the Manila Water's supposed losses between June 2015 to November 2019 for non-implementation of water rate hikes upon orders by the Philippine government. The President called this provision in the government's contract with the water firms onerous.

concessionaires would like to seek an audience with the President. Before you talk to the government, finish your obligation first by helping our countrymen who are in need, give medicine to the sick, assistance to those who are victims of the calamities or support to policemen or military personnel and their families who were abandoned," he said.

He also urged the Department of Justice, along with the Office of the Solicitor General, to ensure that they protect the interest of the Filipinos.

"We do not need companies which are just profiting from our countrymen. Let us protect the rights and welfare of our nation and our countrymen," Go told the agencies.

Go, who served as a long-time aide of President Rodrigo Duterte, said he will stand with the Chief Executive's decision to demand accountability from the water concessionaires.

"If there are those who believe that money and profit are more important than the lives of Filipinos – who we have vowed to serve and

"We surrendered our sovereignty to them. I can't imagine two administrations allowing it to be bargained away," he said, referring to former Presidents Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Benigno Simeon Aquino III.

In a late breaker, Aquino was rushed to the Makati Medical Center on Monday. His spokesman Atty. Abigail Valte said Aquino only had a regular medical procedure as she denied the former president had suffered a heart attack.

The Philippine government also lost another arbitration case filed by Maynilad, the other water firm servicing the other half of Metro Manila, amounting to P3.4 billion.

"How can I tell the people, let's allow the compromise?" the President asked. "That's plunder!"

Sen. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, meanwhile, sought the renegotiation of the concession agreements entered into by the

government with the two major water suppliers.

It is amazing how the private water concessionaires see this. They do nothing but to abuse not only the water that the Filipinos own but the trust of their consumers.

In a privilege speech, Go said the government needs to chaffer with the firms to eliminate or neutralize the disadvantageous provisions in the agreements and align the governmental and public interests with those of the two companies.

The neophyte lawmaker said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System should explore the possibility of terminating the extension of the concessionaire agreement that lasts until 2037, hinting that President Rodrigo Duterte might ask the agency to do so.

"I heard these big private

whose rights we have pledged to protect – we will be standing on different sides this time," Go said.

"It is amazing how the private water concessionaires see this. They do nothing but to abuse not only the water that the Filipinos own but the trust of their consumers," he added.

The neophyte senator slammed anew the supposedly unpaid corporate income taxes by the water distributors, the continuing increases in water rates, and the absence of wastewater treatment facilities which is part of the "environmental charges" paid for by consumers.

"Aside from that, they should also be charged not only for failing to deliver to the terms of their contract but also for the billions – if not trillions – worth of environmental damage caused by their failure to construct a sewerage and wastewater system. This is aside from the almost P1 billion fines that they were told to pay by the Supreme Court last August 2019 because of violations in relation to the Philippine Clean Water Act," Go said.

In a separate speech, Sen. Francis Tolentino said the water crisis has

been affecting the daily lives of Filipinos living in Metro Manila.

"The water crisis has affected not only the national economy or the productivity of students, workers and everyone in society but it ultimately puts the health of the people, especially children, at serious risk and threatens the country's attainment of sustainable development," Tolentino said.

Sen. Koko Pimentel supported Go's call when he opined that the Chief Executive can disregard the extension of the water contract granted by the past administration.

"The original lifetime of the contract is on 2022. In the middle of that, they agreed to the expiration of 2037. That agreement is not yet effective because the first one has not expired yet," Pimentel said.

The House of Representatives is also poised at looking into the issue, Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano said.

With Keith Calayag
and Francis T. Wakefield

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Rody hits Noy, Gloria

Over 'plunderous' water contracts

By MJ Blancaflor,
Macon Ramos-Araneta
and Rey E. Requejo

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Monday took a swipe at former Presidents Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Benigno Aquino III, saying they allowed the country's Constitution to be bargained away over the "plunderous" agreements with water concessionaires.

The water firms, he said, should also be afraid because the government contract with them violated the Anti-Graft Law.

"I cannot imagine two administrations allowing our Constitution to be bargained away," President Duterte said in a speech in Malacañang before police and military men, as he lashed out anew at Maynilad and Manila Water.

In the Senate, Senator Francis Tolentino asked the Senate to investigate the apparent "onerous" contracts executed between the Philippine government and the water concessionaires.

In a privilege speech, Tolentino said the probe was urgent since, over the

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weekend, reports suggested Manila Water and Maynilad are seeking approval for yet again another water rate increase to be implemented in the first quarter of 2020.

He said the rate increase pertains to the Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment which allows the concessionaires to recover or compensate for fluctuations in foreign exchange rates.

Also alarming, he noted, are the decreasing water levels in Angat Dam, which supplies 98 percent of Metro Manila's needs.

This had reached the critical level of 160 meters this year.

At the same time, the Department of Justice gave assurances there would be no water service interruption in Metro Manila even if there was a looming legal tussle between the government and the two water concessionaires over what Duterte described as "onerous" and "grossly disadvantageous" provisions in the 1997 water concession agreement.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said the government was now preparing legal approaches to challenge a ruling rendered by Permanent Court of Arbitration in Singapore ordering the Philippine government to compensate the Manila Water Company P7.4 billion and Maynilad Water Services Inc. P3.6 billion purportedly representing their supposed losses for not having been allowed to raise water rates.

"If they will stop the water supply, the government will have to take over, deal with it. But I don't think we will get to that point. There will be no stoppage of water supply," Guevarra said in an interview.

"It does not mean that it can be enforced at any given time. The government is ready to oppose any enforcement of that because it is against public policy," he added.

The priority is to revise the concession agreements entered into by the state-run Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and the concessionaires, not the arbitral rulings, he said.

"This problem can be solved. We just have to weed out provisions disadvantageous to the government," Guevarra said.

Tolentino said it was a sharp decline from the normal high operating level of 212 meters and the 180 minimum operating level.

The crux of the matter, the senator said, lies in the Concession Agreements and Letters of Undertaking between the MWSS and Maynilad and Manila Water.

As having the force of law between the parties, he said the Concession Agreements governed the relations between the state regulator and the water concessionaires and provides for their rights and obligations as they maintain the country's water and sewerage system.

Duterte also said he wanted to talk with government lawyers who crafted the 1997 deal with the two utility firms which distribute water in Metro Manila and nearby provinces under agreements signed with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

"I want to talk to them. It cannot be fixed until I talked to the concessionaires. I want to talk with government lawyers who were sons of a bitch in crafting this deal," he said.

The deal was signed during the Ramos administration and a review by the Department of Justice revealed "onerous" provisions were stipulated in it.

The agreement carried a provision that says the government should "indemnify" the company against any loss that could result from the regulator's actions that is the MWSS.

"The contract itself is a mirror of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Law. They should be really afraid," he said.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration has directed the government to pay the Ayala-owned Manila Water with P7.4 billion and Pangilinan-led Maynilad with P3.4 billion for their respective losses since the state did not allow the firms to increase prices years ago.

"How will I compromise? That's classic economic plunder," he asked.

According to Tolentino, the water concessionaires' corporate greed was the reason for the current water crisis.

He said the water crisis had affected not only the national economy or the productivity of students, workers and everyone in society but it ultimately puts the health of the people, especially children, at serious risk and threatens the country's attainment of sustainable development.

He cited the findings of the WHO that the Philippines, around one in 10 people do not have access to improved water resources.

As stated in a study conducted by Water. Org, out of 105 million Filipinos, nearly seven million rely on unimproved, unsafe and unsustainable water sources and more than 24 million lack access to improved sanitation.

With the current water crisis, people are more vulnerable to water-related diseases, such as diarrhea, dengue fever and intes-

tinal worms, as they search for alternative sources of water, thus increasing the risk of diseases as these may be unsafe and unsanitary.

Meanwhile, Senator Christopher "Bong" Go urged the MWSS to explore the possibility of terminating the extension of the concessionaire agreement. "The President might also ask that you do this eventually."

He also expressed his belief to renegotiate and rework these contracts to: (1) eliminate or neutralize those provisions which are unduly disadvantageous to the government; and (2) align both governmental and private interests to one common goal: public interest.

He emphasized at our government and the people are now at the mercy of these big private concessionaires.

"It is apparent that many of the provisions in the concessionaire agreements are unfair and unjust to the Filipino people," said Go.

Furthermore, Go said these water concessionaires should also be charged not only for failing to deliver to the terms of their contract but also for the billions—if not trillions—worth of environmental damage caused by their failure to construct a sewerage and waste water system.

"This is aside from the almost 1 billion pesos worth of fines that they were told to pay by the Supreme Court last August 2019 because of violations in relation to the Philippine Clean Water Act," he added.

The DOJ chief warned that if the concessionaires rejected the amendments to the 1997 water concession to weed out its onerous and disadvantageous provisions, the government would be forced to take appropriate legal action.

"If the concessionaires do not accept the amendments to be proposed by the government will be compelled to take legal action," Guevarra said.

Guevarra stressed that the government wanted the water concessionaires to agree to the proposed amendments by the government, otherwise the government will seek for the rescission of the agreement.

The Justice secretary debunked insinuation that the Duterte administration wants new concessionaires to take over the operations of Maynilad and Manila Water.

"It's only when the courts order the rescission of the water concession agreements that the government may open the field to competition, unless the government itself can take over actual operations, which is rather unlikely," Guevarra pointed out.



Water level at Angat Dam still 16.5 meters below yr-end target

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) continues to regulate water releases from Angat Dam for domestic and irrigation purposes as the water level at the major reservoir remains below the year-end target of 212 meters.

Water allocation for domestic use of Metro Manila and nearby areas remains at 40 cubic meters per second (cms) or 3,450 million liters per day (MLD) until the end of the month, according to NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr.

Meanwhile, water releases from Angat Dam for the irrigation requirements of some 27,000 hectares in Bulacan and Pampanga was also retained at 5 cms or 432 MLD, he added.

"We are still reviewing data for allocation next month (January)," David said.

Based on the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) monitoring, the water level at Angat Dam has slightly increased to 195.75 meters on Monday from 195.55 meters last Sunday.

It was still short of 16.25 meters from its year-end target of 212 meters normal high water level. Reaching its desired level will ensure the availability of sufficient water until the summer of 2020.

In case there is a need to augment water source at Angat Dam, David noted that NWRB will be "preparing some deep wells within Metro Manila and cloud seeding operations are on standby."

Authorities have earlier admitted that Angat Dam may no longer recover to its normal high water level by the end of the year, but remain hopeful that the northeast monsoon or "amihan" and possible tropical cyclone this month could still provide rains in the Angat watershed in Bulacan.

PAGASA has projected that the amount of rainfall over most parts of Luzon will likely be below average in December, while rainfall will be near average in most of Visayas and Mindanao. However, the country may still be affected by one to two tropical cyclones this month. **(Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)**



Duterte wants a dialogue with water firms, lawyers

BY BERNADETTE D. NICOLAS
@BNicolasBM

PRESIDENT Duterte said he is keen on meeting with the officials from Manila Water and Maynilad, as well as the government lawyers who were behind the 1997 water concession agreements, which the Department of Justice described as “onerous.”

The Chief Executive has also reiterated this threat that those behind the government contracts with the water concessionaires are liable for “economic plunders.” Prior to this, Duterte accused them of committing economic sabotage.

The President said it was “unfortunate” that the alleged onerous water concession agreements were in effect for two administrations.

“The matter will not be resolved until I get to talk to the water concessionaires. I want the government

lawyers who crafted the contracts to join us,” he said in a speech during the oath-taking of newly appointed generals and flag officers of the Armed Forces of Philippines and star-rank officers of the Philippine National Police in Malacañang on Monday.

However, the President said in the same speech that he is not open to a compromise with the water concessionaires. “The P7.4 billion [that government needs to pay Manila Water], how can you resolve that? How will I compromise? [If I make a compromise] that’s economic plunder,” said Duterte. “How can I tell the people that as President, I agreed to a settlement?”

The President has been lambasting the water concessionaires after the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in Singapore ordered Manila to pay east zone concessionaire Manila

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Water P7.4 billion for the non-implementation of water-rate increases that occurred prior to his presidency. The PCA had also ruled on a similar case filed by west zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc., ordering the State to pay P3.4 billion for Maynilad’s losses from March 2015 to August 2016.

Amend, not rescind

MALACAÑANG on Sunday said the President has not made an order to rescind the deals, pointing out that the Chief Executive wants the contracts amended to remove onerous provisions.

The Palace has since stood firm that the government will not pay the P10-billion compensation to the water concessionaires since the decision stemmed from onerous deals.

Manila Water is a publicly listed company and a subsidiary of Ayala Corp., while businessman Manny Pangilinan’s Pacific Investments Corp. owns a controlling stake in Maynilad.



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DATE

Provisions of water concession agreements raise a lot of issues

President Duterte's vicious tirade against the alleged "onerous" 1997 water concessionaire contracts of Maynilad and Manila Water opened a Pandora's box on the failure of previous administrations to protect consumer interest.

At the start, Maynilad's basic charge for the west zone was only P7.21 per cubic meter while Manila Water billed P4.02 per cubic meter in the east zone. Today, these basic charges have jumped by over 402 percent for Maynilad at P36.24 per cubic meter and over 609 percent for Manila Water at P28.52 per cubic meter.

Maynilad says it spent P180 billion for the improvement of water facilities aside from shouldering the debt of the

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS). For its part, Manila Water says it also spent billions in improving water availability from 26 to 99 percent in its area.

Many years ago, consumers were paying for add-ons like the foreign currency differential adjustment (FCDA) rate, environmental charge (20 percent of water charges: basic plus FCDA), sewer charge (20 percent of basic for commercial and industrial customers), value-added tax (VAT), MSC (maintenance service charge for the water meter) and for capital investment projects such as the previously scrapped Laiban/Wawa Dam projects.

MWSS regulators have since limited the additional



SHARP EDGES

JAKE J. MADERAZO

charges to only four, namely, environmental charges, FCDA, MSC and VAT.

But numerous questions remain unanswered.

First, why do Maynilad and Manila Water avoid being called "public utility companies" when they are manag-

ing "public water." They say they are "mere agents" of the MWSS which they point to as the "public utility." This interpretation allows them to pass on to consumers their business expenses, including corporate income taxes. Unfortunately, the "legal interpretation" is still pending today in the Supreme Court.

Second, the "mere agents" explanation allows these companies to increase their return on investment to more than 12 percent (an imposition on public utility companies such as Meralco). Is water owned by the state not a "public utility?"

Third, why were these water concession contracts extended in 2009 by 15 years by then President Gloria Macapa-

gal-Arroyo or exactly 13 years before these were set to expire in 2022? Why the rush? Because of the extension, the contracts are now valid until 2037.

Fourth, why is it that in the concession agreement, the national government or even Congress can't interfere in water rate increases or the "yearly rate rebasing?" Politics or playing it safe?

Fifth, why did the concession agreement assign exclusively to the MWSS Regulatory Office the burden of overseeing the concessionaires' operations? After all, the regulatory office is purely recommendatory and unable to impose fines and penalties on erring concessionaires.

Were there public hearings

before these rate increases took effect?

Sixth, why did both water companies fail to build adequate "sewerage facilities" in the last 22 years? In fact, the Supreme Court, by a 14-0 vote, fined each of them P921,464,184, on top of a daily fine of almost P322,102 subject to a 10-percent increase every two years.

Lastly, why did the original and extended concession agreements allow "government guarantees" for both Maynilad and Manila Water?

These are serious questions up for discussion. But technically, what we really need now is a truly independent water regulatory agency to take care of our water while also looking after the welfare of consumers. INQ



We own, we benefit

FILIPINOS own the land, water and air that are defined by our geographical boundaries and the Constitution labels such ownership as patrimonial. This being the case, their use should be beneficial to every Filipino, whether in terms of price and consistency of service. Such ownership includes the future generations.

Filipinos agree to a social contract that requires us to surrender certain rights for government to manage and ensure a just management of these resources or assets and that is where the national and local governments enter. Both regulate the private sector. In simple terms, the case of a market failure would mean government enters the market to correct distortions. Such was the case in the privatization and liberalization of certain patrimonial assets. In 1992, under Fidel V. Ramos or FVR, so-called monopolies were broken down, privatized and liberalized — from telecommunication companies, to power and water. Crises were declared, and laws enacted to respond to the declaration.

“Privatization is the transfer of control of ownership of economic resources from the public sector to the private sector,” while “liberalization is the elimination of state control over economic activities. It implies greater autonomy to the business enterprises in decision making and removal of government interference.” Privatization supposedly leads to liberalization. The other buzzword then was “globalization” or the integration of economies, ensuring ease in the conduct of international trade.

With the pointed attack by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte or PRRD on Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc., the whole idea of benefits arising from patrimonial assets are now front and center. And it is the hope of all that these assets are used to provide good service at rates that are fair for the service actually



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delivered and not on a promise at some certain point in time, contrary to the agreement. The concession agreement is between the “water companies such as Maynilad and the government. It details the business arrangement where Maynilad is considered as an agent and contractor of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) for the West Zone of the Greater Manila Area.”

Maynilad operates in the cities of Manila (certain areas), Quezon City (certain areas), Makati (certain areas), Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon — all in Metro Manila, and in the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus, and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario — all in Cavite province. Maynilad is the largest private water concessionaire in the Philippines in terms of customer base. As of December 2016, it had a customer base of more than nine million. It has been owned for the past 10 years by Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC), DMCI Holdings, Inc. and Marubeni Corp.

Manila Water is a subsidiary of the Ayala Corp., while Maynilad is owned and managed by the DMCI-MPIC Water Co. Inc., a joint venture between the Manuel Pangilinan-led MPIC and DMCI Holdings Inc.

There is the Laguna Lake canceled project which resulted in the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) ordering the Philippine government to pay P800 million to Baggerwerken Decloedt En Zoon (BDC) for scrapping the P18.7-billion Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project (LLRP) in 2011. ICSID issued the award on Jan. 23,

►TiquiaA6

2017, six years after former president Benigno Aquino 3rd junked the deal that was twice declared by then-Justice Secretary Leila de Lima as “legal and binding.” The Kaliwa Dam is another loose end in the supply chain because of ancestral domain and other issues.

Interestingly, Congress is foot dragging on the amendment of Commonwealth Act 146, or the “Public Service Act.” The same has been pending since 2016 with the Senate having five Senate bills and the approved House version, all amending Commonwealth Act 146 filed by senators Sherwin Gatchalian, Juan Miguel Zubiri,

Richard Gordon and Paolo Benigno Aquino 4th. Committee Report 301, recommended the approval of Senate Bill (SB) 1754 titled, “An Act Amending Commonwealth Act 146, Otherwise Known as The Public Service Act, as Amended, and For Other Purposes,” in substitution of SBs 695, 1261, 1291, 1441 and 1594, and taking into consideration House Bill 5828. The proposed bill recognized that “public service” is the much broader term while the term “public utility” is just a subset and is much smaller in scope under public service.

The Public Service Act or PSA,

was enacted in 1936. More than 83 years have passed since its enactment. Those bills saw the end of the day when the 17th Congress ended. Under the 18th Congress, the measure was filed by Sen. Frank Drilon as SB 13 and it remains pending in the Committee on Public Services and Economic Affairs since July 2019.

Filipinos own the air, water and land subject to certain regulations. Filipinos do not benefit from its usage in terms of efficient service and/or pricing. Patrimonial should serve Filipinos more than the private sector. Yes, the private sector is there to earn but not earn

to the detriment of service and the owners of the patrimonial assets. Imagine if the country can do a book value of these assets?

Electricity, water, airwaves are basic to Filipinos just like food, housing and jobs. “Debt is one person’s liability, but another person’s asset.” But it hurts if the owners, the Filipino people, always end up at the losing end and the liability of corporate giants are passed on to the citizens because government did not allow them to earn on a piece of patrimony. Some say it is not that easy. We say, that is the basic proposition that should be the order of the day.



MARTES 10 DISYEMBRE 2019 REMATE 9

BAGONG WATER SOURCE KAILANGAN TALAGA!

kontrobersiyal na Kaliwa Dam Project sa Barangay Pagsanahan, General Nakar at sa Barangay Magsaysay, Infanta na kapwa saklaw ng lalawigan ng Quezon. Inaasahan na makapagbibigay ang bagong water infrastructure ng 600 million-liters-a-day (MLD) capacity.

Ang problema, tinututulan ito ng mismong LGU Infanta, mga environmental groups at ng mga katutubong Dumagat dahil sa epekto nito sa kalikasan. Lumalabas kasi na halos mabubura sa mapa ang malaking bahagi ng Infanta kung magpapakawala ng tubig ang dam na ang epekto ay mataas na pagbaha.

May isyu rin sa usapin ng pagkilala sa ancestral domain right ng mga Dumagat sa Kaliwa-Kanan-Agos River na

siyang paglalagyan ng dams (Laiban at Kaliwa). Nakakuha na ng Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang proyekto at sabi ni Pangulong Digong Duterte ay gagamitin niya ang lahat ng kapangyarihan sa ilalim ng Konstitusyon para lamang matukoy ito.

Sa ngayon, ang Kaliwa Dam Project lamang ang siyang most viable water infrastructure na nakikitang mas mabilis na solusyon ng dalawang water concessionaires na Manila Water Company at Maynilad Water Services at suportado ng pamahalaan. Paglalaanan ito ng Php 10 Billion official development assistance ng Chinese government pero ang kabuuang halaga ng



DR. HILDA C. ONG

proyekto ay Php 18.75 Billion.

May on-going naman na proyekto, ito ang Sumag Diversion and Relocation Project sa Umiray, General Nakar (Quezon) na isang diversion tunnel mula sa Umiray River patungong Angat Reservoir na may kapasidad na 188 MLD.

Dito rin itatayo ang General Nakar Relocation na gagawin diumanong 'model settlement area' para sa mga maaapektuhan ng pagtatayo ng Laiban Dam. Lalagyan ito ng pabahay, katamtamang lupa na puwedeng pagtaniman ng mga gulay o prutas, at paglalaanan din ng pondo para sa sustainable livelihood project ng mga residente.

Inaasahan na makadagdag ng 2 centimeter na water inflow ang diversion project sa Angat Reservoir, karagdagan na magseseguro na may panlaban tayo sa El Niño phenomenon at sa kabuntot nitong tagtuyot. Naiintindihan ng inyong lingkod si Pangulong Duterte sa kanyang pagnanais na maisagawa na kaagad ang mga karagdagang dams, mismong ang United Nations na ang nagsasabi na maaaring pagmulan ng kaguluhan ang paghahanap ng malinis na tubig sa taong 2030. Mamamatay sa uhaw at bantot ang mga nasa 15 milyong nasa Metropolitan Manila kapag hindi umakasyon ang kasalukuyang pamahalaan.



TITLE:

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SM noses out Dennis Uy, others in crowded race to reclaim Manila Bay

The SM Group has nosed out Duterte campaign financier Dennis Uy and others in a crowded race to reclaim land and build a new city out of Manila Bay.

Friday's announcement by SM Prime Holdings that it had already secured the pertinent permits and clearances and the notice to proceed means that SM and its reclamation partners, the Dutch dredging contractor Boskalis and the China Harbour Engineering Co., can begin actual work by the first quarter of 2020.

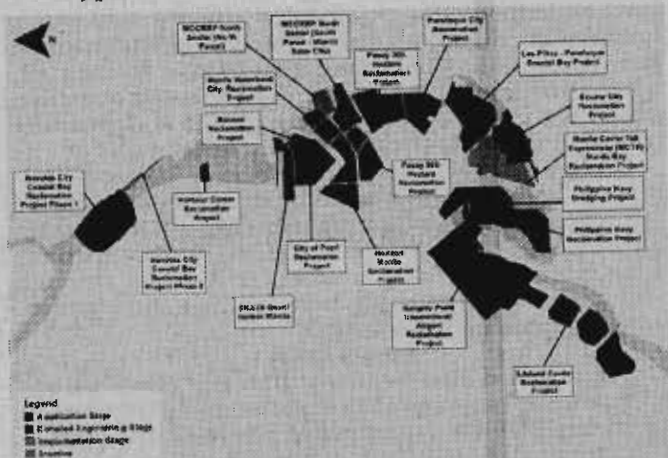


VICTOR C. AGUSTIN

The Chinese engineering firm is, incidentally, also Dennis Uy's partner in its planned reclamation of two islands right next to

SM's.

"The project involves the reclamation of approximately 360 hectares through the construction of three artificial islands... designed to withstand potential large earthquakes (and) typhoons," Boskalis said of SM's reclamation.



MAP BY KMC SAVILLS

The SM reclamation would cost about \$720 million (about P36.7 billion), Boskalis disclosed, adding that its project share "amounts" to about half of the cost.

Stated another way, reclaiming land from Manila Bay would work out to about P102 million a hectare, or P10,200 a square meter, bargain basement-level compared to the P715,000/sqm being asked now for a 3,500-sqm commercial property in The Fort.

Turn to B4

MONEY-GO-ROUND... From B3

Dennis Uy's Udenna, on the other hand, has penciled in a P62-billion project cost in November 2017 for his planned reclamation of 265 hectares out of Manila Bay, also in partnership like SM with the Pasay City government.

Even without factoring the two-year inflation and related costs, Dennis Uy's reclamation plan works out to nearly P236 million a hectare, or P23,600/sqm, more than twice that of SM's.

Do not be surprised if political conspiracy theorists pounce on this double-the-price discrepancy.

(SM Prime late Monday morning announced that the cost of the Pasay reclamation project has gone up to P90 billion.

The new SM costing works out to about P250 million/hectare, or about P25,000/sqm, closer to the Udenna pricing.

There goes your conspiracy theory.)

Christmas in Forbes for Camcam

The long-time companion of the late Marcos military chief Fabian Ver, Edna Camcam, will get to spend another Christmas and New Year in Forbes Park comfort.

The good tidings was delivered by no less than the Supreme Court after the high tribunal dismissed a certiorari petition by billionaire doctor-developer, Daniel Vasquez, in his long-running feud to eject the widow from the contested North Forbes property.

Upholding the doctrine of hierarchy of courts, the Supreme Court said the Vasquez attempt to seek the intervention of the high tribunal was "premature" since the lower courts have concurrence of jurisdiction on precisely the same issue that Vasquez is contesting.

The Court of Appeals had earlier dismissed a Vasquez petition to stop the Forbes Park Association from granting Camcam and her children homeowner's privileges.

The CA ruled that Vasquez, who now claims the foreclosed house and lot on Cambridge Circle in North Forbes, had failed to implead Camcam in the case he filed with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board against the Forbes Park homeowners' association.

The CA upheld the HLURB's ruling that Vasquez's failure to comply with the order to implead Camcam as respondent warranted the dismissal of the complaint.

The appellate court said that Camcam was an indispensable party to the complaint because if the HLURB arbiter were to decide in favor of Vasquez, it would in effect deprive Camcam of her enjoyment of the privileges granted her.

On the other hand, if the HLURB proceeded with the complaint without impleading Camcam, "all subsequent actions of the arbiter would be rendered null and void for want of authority to act not only to the unimpleaded parties, but also as regards Vasquez," the Court of Appeals said.

Camcam is represented by Ponce Enrile Reyes & Manalastas; Vasquez, by Divina Law.

Heard through the grapevine

Speaking of reclamation, the SM and Udenna proposals to create artificial islands from Manila Bay each have a provision to install a marina in their respective projects, hopefully to entice the financially-challenged Manila Yacht Club to move out of the sewer-filled lagoon across the Ospital ng Maynila.

And that is probably why all the "troublemakers" -- George Flackett, Alan Burrell, Martin Tarico, Peter Caposto, Fil Junterreal, Jesus Avecilla Jr., and Ernest Echaz -- have all been expelled or forced to leave the club, preparatory to a real estate-play.

E-mail: moneygoround.manila@yahoo.com



TITLE:

FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

Reclaim

In 1906, architect and urban planner Daniel H. Burnham drew up a plan that would have made Manila and the cities south of it immensely more livable than what they turned out to be.



At the core of his plan was the reclamation of Manila Bay and the construction of public parks along the coast for the "recreation and refreshment" of the city's residents. He dramatically extended the Luneta Park to restore the broad vista to the bay for the cluster of public buildings planned for the area.

Now called Rizal Park, the reclaimed area is Manila's pride. It hosted the grand events that shaped our nation over the past century.

The area reclaimed according to Burnham's plan is now where the Manila Hotel, the Quirino Grandstand and the US embassy stand. The reclaimed area includes what is now Roxas Boulevard that Burnham intended to be a 250-foot wide swathe that would encompass roadways, tramways, a bridle path, and broad sidewalks. He envisioned the area to be shaded with bamboo, acacia, mango and palm trees.

Dense plantings, thought Burnham, would increase "the value of the stretch of ocean and sky." He imagined this magnificent public space to stretch from Intramuros to Cavite City.

Interrupted by the war, the reclamation extended only to Baclaran. Subsequently, however, the Cultural Center area and the Mall of Asia complex were constructed on reclaimed land. The Coastal Road continued the road link on to Cavite.

But all the subsequent reclamation fall short of fulfilling Burnham's magnificent vision of a continuous stretch of verdant public space. The architect carried part of his vision back to his home city, resurrected in the Plan for Chicago that centered on transforming Lake Michigan's waterfront into recreational open space.

Many cities all over the world have used reclamation as a means to increase the supply of land available. The reclaimed areas boosted real estate taxes for these cities, created new jobs and attracted business opportunities.

Hong Kong increased space for new roads and commercial space through reclamation. The Hong Kong International Airport, the world's biggest cargo airport, as well as HK Disneyland are built on reclaimed land.

Singapore reclaimed land for the Marina Bay Sands that attracts 30 million visitors annually. Tokyo's New Waterfront City stands on land reclaimed from Tokyo Bay. Sri Lanka reclaimed 269 hectares for the New Colombo Port City that is designed to be a mini-Singapore. Malaysia is doing the same in building Forest City from four man-made islands envisioned to become a smart, green and futuristic metropolis housing 700,000 people.

We are building our own reclaimed "new city".

Last week, the City of Pasay and the SM group signed a deal that paves the way for the reclamation of 360 hectares that will be home to a modern, well-planned business district.

The deal will substantially enlarge the City of Pasay and increase its economy several-fold. Unlike the "old" Pasay, the new business district will have wide avenues, master-planned communities and state-of-the-art business facilities.

"Old" Pasay has largely fallen off the map, saved only by the fact that it hosts our international airport. The massive reclamation project will make Pasay a world-class city.



12-10-18

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Occidental Mindoro bans coal plants

THE provincial government of Occidental Mindoro has passed an ordinance banning the use of coal-fired power plants in the province in a bid to protect its resources and protect the welfare of its residents.

In a bold ordinance approved and adopted by the city council led by vice governor and presiding officer Peter Alfaro on Dec. 5, the government of Occidental Mindoro said it is choosing clean air and growth instead of "suffering in the near future."

"World powered by natural gas would be healthier than a world powered by coal, but healthier still would be a world powered by renewables. The development of cleaner fuels requires taking serious measures to reduce the severity of its urban air quality issues and considerations on the importance of transitioning to re-

newable sources of energy," the province said in the ordinance.

Coal is the largest emitter among primary electricity generation sources, accounting for 30 percent of all energy related CO2 emissions, according to the ordinance, citing the October 2018 issue of The Environmental Magazine.

"Of all energy resources, coal is one of the most injurious to the environment and health. Further, coal by-products cause a lot of pollution, which contributes to global warming and climate change," the province said.

By passing the ordinance, Occidental Mindoro adds to the roster of six provinces in the Philippines that have banned coal-powered energy projects.

These are Guimaras, Masbate, Ilocos Norte, Negros Oriental, Bohol and Sorsogon.

In place of coal, the province shall pursue clean and renewable energy projects.



INTROSPECTIVE

TONY F. KATIGBAK

Climate change gone awry

We breathe a collective sigh of relief as the country this week can officially say that Typhoon Tisoy has come and gone. And while the massive storm did leave a wide and deadly swath of destruction in Luzon, it could have been so much worse. The typhoon was being touted the next super storm similar to the likes of Ondoy or Yolanda.



And while we can't be blinded to the fact that many of our countrymen were indeed horribly affected by Tisoy, we still can feel relief that it wasn't another Yolanda which devastated the Philippines like no typhoon before it. To date, Yolanda remains the strongest storm ever recorded and we must pray that it stays that way.

Over the course of last week, I believe that our country did a much better job being prepared for the storm. In the interest of safety, prudence and caution were exercised and school was suspended and flights cancelled at what was expected to be the height of the storm. And rightfully so – it was registering at super storm levels by weather bureaus around the world so extra caution was not just important, it was necessary.

After Tuesday passed, I heard many people talking about how the storm wasn't as bad as the news was saying, that we had over-anticipated and took too many preventive measures leading to loss of work, school, and the like. Flyers who were coming to the airport on Tuesday from 11 am-11 pm were particularly vexed because they had to find alternative flights.

Personally, I think we shouldn't be upset about being too careful. If anything, this should be the norm. We've all seen how unprepared we were in the past and that has cost us thousands of lives and billions of pesos in damage. This is not something that should happen again. If anything, we should always err on the side of caution because a day or two of work being suspended or classes being halted is nothing when held up against the potential danger a super typhoon would bring.

What I mean to say is that we should feel grateful and blessed that the typhoon wasn't as bad as we thought it was going to be instead of irritated that we had to disrupt our daily schedules for a few days. I personally applaud our weather bureau and disaster preparedness committees for being on the ball and providing up-to-the-minute updates on the storm so that everyone would be prepared. For one brief shining moment, it seemed that everyone was on the same page – and that page was to keep everyone as safe as possible. It's amazing what we can achieve when our government agencies all work together.

The same can be said for what happened with the SEA Games. We faced several hiccups in the beginning, but when everyone finally came together and worked with one another, things were addressed and fixed one by one. And now, we are raking in the gold medals. I am so proud of what our athletes have been able to achieve. May this inspire our government even more to provide support and financial aid to our rising athletic stars – and in more fields than just basketball, boxing, and billiards. I think with this showing we are proving that there is so much more Filipinos can do.

Indeed, it has been a very emotional up and down these past couple of weeks and everyone is handling all of that on top of the holiday hustle the stress of impending Christmas – which for adults means added expenses, crazy traffic, and the late onset pile up of work on top of all the merriment. I think we all deserve a little pat on the back for making it here.

And now that we have, we need to put our focus on things that really matter. This storm is yet another example of crazy weather phenomena we have been experiencing these past several years. The super storm was barely a concern a decade ago and now these are happening more and more often. We have to recognize the effects that climate change is having on the environment and on all of us.

As we move into 2020 we need to put more efforts into battling climate change or we are going to find ourselves facing more super storms and more with a lot less resources. And the clock is ticking. We no longer have the luxury of time. If we don't start making changes and soon, the planet is going to start fighting back.

We saw a short documentary called 5 Degrees Warmer showing the effect that a 5-degree raise in temperature would have on the world and it was truly eye opening. In so many ways, it seemed like a horror film, with the worst part being that it was true

and happening in the world today. So many parts of the globe would become uninhabitable, water would become scarce, and eventually people would be left to fight tooth and nail for whatever resources remained. And that's just 5 degrees.

But the documentary did end on a hopeful note – we still have time, a teeny tiny window to turn things around. But we have to act soon. If everyone just did a little to lessen their eco footprint we might be able to make a difference. We have to do it now or there won't be a world left to leave to our children.





COP25: The last climate conference

First word

DID you know that the current COP25 — the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) — could well be the last climate conference of nations that world will have to put up with? That this may well be the last time that the United Nations will have the opportunity to scare humanity with its fear mongering about the climate?

After COP25, there will be no more conferences or climate summits. No more COP, unless the nations absurdly and foolishly decide to prolong the framework convention, or renew the contract of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres for fearmongering.

From Mr. Greg Odogwu, writing in the *Punch*, I got this most enlightening information:

"There are many reasons why the ongoing United Nations Climate Change Conference in Madrid shall be interesting, and decisive...the official name of this annual global event is Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was agreed to by the international community on Earth Day in Rio



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MAKABENTA

de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 — and took effect 1994. Accordingly, because this year's conference is the 25th, it is known as COP25.

The first reason why all eyes are on the Madrid meeting is because it is the final COP before we enter the defining year of 2020, when nations must submit new climate action plans. Because the UNFCCC had non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries that signed the accord, and no enforcement mechanism, various extensions to this treaty were negotiated during past COPs, including the Paris Agreement (COP21), adopted in 2015. In Paris, all countries agreed to step up efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures. Their actions are called Nationally Determined Contributions. They also decided to significantly increase climate action financing.

The question now is whether the nations will decide to renew or extend the treaty next year. Which

country would want to submit a new climate action plan?

Who wants the UN to continue its climate action agenda, and contribute funds to it?

Finally, the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) will cease to exist after COP25.

What country would be willing to prolong this panel, which absolutely will not debate or defend its grandiose predictions against credentialed scientists?

The UN says the world and humanity could end in 11 years because of a climate apocalypse.

I believe there is now greater hope for the world and humanity, because we are looking at the last climate conference under UN auspices."

No evidence of climate crisis

Issues and Insights, one of my favorite sources of information on the climate debate, published an editorial on December 6 that comprehensively sums up the arguments against climate alarmism.

Its editorial is titled, 'The UN is holding its 25th climate conference — please don't let there be a 26th.'

I reproduce it entirely below: "Before the party even started, UN Secretary-General Antonio

Guterres showed up in Spain to tell us 'the point of no return is no longer over the horizon,' and 'is in sight and hurtling toward us.'

"How long have we been hearing this? Prince Charles has been predicting imminent doomsday for more than a decade, as has Al Gore. Before the conference began, Vice was trying to convince the world that 'The Collapse of Civilization May Have Already Begun,' while Extinction Rebellion has been barking madly that 'billions will die' and 'life on Earth is dying' because of man's use of fossil fuels.

"Despite decades of warnings that the end 'is in sight,' as the Competitive Enterprise Institute recently assured us, 'none of the apocalyptic predictions' of environmental disaster 'with due dates as of today have come true.'

"As the conference's nominal host, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez took up the cudgel because there can be no meeting of the climate clan without an othering of the 'deniers.'

"'Luckily,' said Sánchez, 'only a handful of fanatics deny the evidence.' What evidence would that be, Sr. Prime Minister?

"Of course he can't point to any evidence, because there is none.

► MakabentaA5



■ MAKABENTA FROM A4

COP25: The last climate conference

"A warming planet? Nothing in the record before 1979, when satellites began measuring thermal emissions in the atmosphere, is reliable. The satellite data show some warming, but nothing outside natural variations.

"Receding glaciers and melting ice? Polar ice sheets have not declined at all since NASA satellite instruments began precisely measuring them 35 years ago," says James Taylor, who has written extensively about climate over the years. Meanwhile, "the Antarctic Ice Sheet has been growing at a steady and substantial pace ever since NASA satellites first began measuring the Antarctic ice sheet in 1979." So about those glaciers? The global retreat that the alarmists can't stop talking about is not new. It began before the Civil War was fought, "at the end of the Little Ice Age."

"Increasing sea levels? The oceans have been rising for 10,000 years. NASA says the rate of increase has been about 3.3 millimeters a year, not quite 0.13 of inch, for decades. Hardly cause for alarm.

"More hurricanes? We repeat ourselves: 'Global major hurricane frequency has been trending downward since 1980, while cyclone energy is roughly the same as it was in 1972.'

"Growing wildfires? The media have been fixated on California's fires, so let's look there. And what do we find? Cal Fire, a government agency, has compiled data which show a steep drop-off in acres burned since 2008. The claim goes up in smoke.

"It's obvious the alarmists will say anything to further their agenda. Their evidence is nothing more than fevered imaginations and a perverted hope for catastrophe. But it must be evidence because they say it is.

"Despite their assurances of having gained a superior knowl-

edge, the alarmists cannot draw a straight line from the emissions of carbon dioxide from combusted fossil fuels to whatever it is they're saying this week is a consequence of man-made global warming. If they could, they would have already done so. Instead, they rely on assumptions, a correlation of unreliable data, and incessant screeching.

"By the way, did we mention that Sanchez is an open socialist? He's member of the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party, a fact that brings us around to the real agenda behind the global warming alarmists shock campaign: stepping on capitalism and seizing the world economy.

"We've listed examples of the climate alarmists acknowledging their hidden agenda before, but just recently, we realized we missed one. More than 20 years ago, when global warming hysterics were beginning to rage, then Canadian Minister of the Environment Christine Stewart told the Calgary Herald that 'No matter if the science of global warming is all phony ... climate change [provides] the greatest opportunity to bring about justice and equality in the world.'

"The COP25 attendees, smug, insulting, and spectacularly dishonest, are not meeting to save us from ourselves. They'll be there through December 13 preening, posing, and hectoring, and scheming a path to political domination. Anyone who doubts they're coming after the free economies of the West needs to ask themselves one question: Why are the proposed climate solutions exactly the same policies the political left would enact even without carbon dioxide playing the role of villain?"

"It's not a coincidence. It's a plan."

yenobserver@gmail.com



Technologies, climate change creating new inequalities,

UN says

UNITED NATIONS — A new generation of global inequalities fueled by climate change and technology could trigger violence and political instability if left unchecked, the United Nations (UN) warned on Monday.

Climate change and technology rather than wealth and income are the modern-day wedges that are increasingly dividing the haves from the have-nots, said the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its 2019 Human Development Report.

These forms of inequality are rising as progress has been made in more traditional measures of inequality such as extreme poverty and disease, it said.

"Under the shadow of the climate crisis and sweeping technological change, inequalities in human development are taking new forms," the report said.

"The climate crisis is already hitting the poorest hardest, while technological advances such as machine learning and artificial intelligence can leave behind entire groups of people, even countries,"

Allowing these new inequalities to grow could be "extremely dangerous and highly volatile," said UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner.

"Across the rich and emerging countries and also developing countries where a middle class has emerged, their reactions are increasingly violent," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation ahead of the report's release.

"If not managed well and practically, it will essentially manifest itself in what we see on the evening news — burning

cars, burning buildings, burning infrastructure, millions of people in the streets protesting and overthrowing governments."

Street protests have filled the news of late, in Hong Kong, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Chile, Bolivia, Venezuela and elsewhere over an array of issues including rising prices, government policies, corruption and pro-democracy movements.

The UNDP report said climate change will fuel inequality as it hits developing countries,

many with limited capacity to resist threats from malnutrition, disease and heat stress.

"So the effects of climate change deepen existing social and economic fault lines," it said.

As to technology's effect on inequality, the report said the proportion of adults with university-level educations was growing more than six times faster in highly developed countries than in lower developed countries.

It also said fixed broadband subscriptions were growing 15

times faster in developed countries.

"These are the inequalities that will likely determine people's ability to... function in a knowledge economy," it said.

The changes come as many more people today no longer live in extreme poverty, Steiner said.

"Our aspirations have changed," he said. "People are not just looking at the dollars in their account. They are looking at opportunities, at social mobility and at freedom of choice."

— Reuters



HINDI natin namamailayan na nakalpon na pala ng 150 kaso ng Dengvaxia ang Public Attorney's Office at pinakahuli rito ang isang bata na namatay sa dengue kahit na tatlong beses siyang tinuruan ng Dengvaxia.

Halos pare-pareho ang kalagayan ng mga namamatay na naturukan ng nasabing gamot na gawa ng Sanofi Pasteur, Inc. at inilako ng Zuellig Pharma Corporation.

Namamaga ang utak at iba pang kalamnan, nagdurugo ang mga ito, nagsusuka ng dugo at may sobrang lagnat ang mga biktima bago sila tuluyang mamamatay.

Marami nang kasong isinampa sa Department of Justice ang PAO na pinamumunuan ni Atty. Persida Acosta na inaalalayan naman ni Dr. Erwin Erfel.

Kabilang sa mga kasong nakasampa laban sa mga opisyal ng gobyerno na sangkot sa pagbili, pagpapagamit ng Dengvaxia at mga opisyal ng Sanofi at Zuellig ang reckless imprudence resulting in homicide at paglabag sa Anti-Torture Act at sa Consumer Act of the Philippines.

MAGNET SA BOTO
Ayon mismo sa Department of Health, mahigit sa 800,000 Pinoy na may edad 9 pataas ang nainiksyunan mula Marso 2016 hanggang 2017.

Ginamit ang Dengvaxia ng mga politikong kakampi ni ex-President Benigno Aquino III para umano makakuha ng maraming boto noong 2016 elections ngunit si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang nanalo.

Ayon sa mga imbestigasyon, minadali ng administrasyong Aquino ang pagbili ng Dengvaxia at naglabas ito ng P3.5 bilyon na pambili sa gamot na ito.

Bago dumating ang halalang Mayo 2016, libo-libo na ang nainiksyunan sa mga eskwelahan at barangay at naging patok ito na pangkampanya.

Eh sino naman ang hindi matutuwa sa bali-tang sa bisa ng Dengvaxia ay hindi na magkaka-dengue ang mga Pinoy at kung magkaka-dengue, ang dengue na ang matatlepok.



ULTIMATUM

NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

DENGVAXIA AT POLIO

Dahil sa propaganda ng mga kumita sa Dengvaxia, aba, nagpatuloy ang paggamit nito kahit nakapasok na ang administrasyong Duterte.

NATAKOT LAHAT

Pagdating ng Nobyembre 2017, anak ng tokwa, biglang lumitaw ang nakatatatok na balita.

May mga iniluulat nang namamatay na naturukan ng Dengvaxia kaya sinuspinde ng DOH ang pag-iiniksyon.

Kasunod na nito ang pag-amin mismo ng Sanofi na hindi dapat gamitin ang Dengvaxia sa mga hindi pa nagkaka-dengue.

Kapag nainiksyunan ng Dengvaxia ang hindi pa nagkaka-dengue, "severe" dengue ang aabutin ng mga ito.

"Yun bang === maaari nang mamatay ang pasyente.

Heto ngayon ang punto, mga Bro.

Nag-iiniksyon ang mga taga-DOH at mga barangay, municipal at city doctors and nurses ng Dengvaxia para sa mga nagkasakit na at hindi pa nagkasakit.

Para sa hindi pa nagkasakit, prevention o pamigil umano sa pagkapit ng dengue ang mangyayari.

Eh, gaano karami ang nainiksyunan nang hindi pa nagkaka-dengue?

Ang dami nang namatay bago umaksyon sina Atty. Acosta at nitong mga huling araw na lang nakapagsusumbong sa PAO ang biktima.

At heto na nga, parami nang parami ang kumukuhang sa PAO para eksaminin ang kanilang mga namatayan.

Ang Dengvaxia ay magtatagal ng anim na taon umano sa katawan ng tao.

Sa loob ng anim na taon, anak ng tokwa, lian kaya ang mamamatay sa mahigit 800,000 nainiksyunan?

KASO SA DOJ

May mga nakasampa na ngang kaso sa Department of Justice.

Isang tanong, kailan kaya tayo makabalita na nakapagsampa na ang

DOJ ng kaso sa hukuman dahil may probable cause?

Ang totoo, mahigpit na lilalabanan ng mga defendant ang mga kaso sa pagsasabing inosente sila sa bintang at pagdidiing ligtas ang Dengvaxia bilang gamot.

Kailangan din umang magkaroon ng ibang mga pagsusuri na isasagawa ng ibang tagasuri ng pamahalaan gaya mismo ng DOH.

Ang masaklap, higit na nakararami sa DOH ang nagsasabi na walang masama sa Dengvaxia at ipiniplit nilang sa kanilang pagsusuri, hindi Dengvaxia ang ikinatamatay ng mga pasyente kundi dengue o ibang sakit.

Sa ibang mga kaso, mabilis na nakapagdedisyon ang mga piskal ng DOJ at sinasabi nilang "sa korte ka na lang magpaliwanag."

Pero rito sa Dengvaxia, may mga kaso nang ilang buwan nang nakabinbin at wala pa tayong balita.

Ang tanong ng ating UZI, may ibang mga dahilan ba ng mabagal na kaso sa DOJ maliban sa pag-iingat ng mga piskal na hindi sila dapat magkamali?

Mahirap naman kasing mag-prosecute nang alanganin ang mga biktima dahil bagong klaseseng kaso ang ukol sa Dengvaxia.

Pero paano kung ang dahilan ng mabagal na kaso ay mula sa impluwensya at kapangyarihan ng mga nakademanda?

Para sa mga biktima at kina Atty. Acosta, dapat na pairalin ang tiyaga at pagsasabi ng katotohanan para magkaroon ng tagumpay laban sa programang ginamit pangunahin sa pulitika kaysa serbisyo-publiko at kapakanan ng taumbayan at Pilipinas.

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