

DATE : 12-11-19
Wednesday
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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



12-11-19

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

Krisis sa basura, di mareresolba ng gobyerno lang - DENR

Hindi kakayanin ng gobyerno kung solo lamang nitong reresolbahin ang krisis sa basura sa ating bansa.

Ito ang sinabi ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGU) Concerns Benny Antiporda kaugnay ng deklarasyon ni DENR Roy Cimatu na ang ating bansa lalo na ang Metro Manila ay nasa gitna na ng garbage crisis.

"Solid waste management is not the government's responsibility alone, it is everyone's business," pahayag ni Antiporda na siya ring chairman ng National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC).

Kaugnay nito, nanawagan si Antiporda sa publiko at sa lahat ng stakeholders upang sama-samang lutasin ang problema sa basura sa bansa.

"We shouldn't wait for the time when there are more trash than fish in the ocean," sabi pa ni Antiporda.

Hiniling din nito sa publiko na tulungan ang pamahalaan na maiwasan ang paglala ng problema sa basura sa bansa sa pamamagitan ng pagsasagawa ng tamang waste segregation at disposal at hindi itatapon ang kanilang basura sa kung saan saang lugar lamang.

Hindi rin anya magiging matagumpay ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng pamahalaan sa Manila bay kung walang naipatutupad na epektibong solid waste management sa iba't ibang lokalidad sa palibot ng naturang baybayin. *(Angie dela Cruz)*



12-11-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

EDITORIAL

Everyone's business

IT'S certainly time to step up the pressure on all stakeholders and the rest of the Filipino people to address the worsening garbage problem not only in the metropolis but elsewhere.

Even a top official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) admitted that the government could not do it alone in solving the country's garbage problem.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, a former newspaperman and a lifetime member of the National Press Club (NPC), said solid waste management is "everyone's business."

Antiporda said that without concerted efforts, the situation threatens to get worse, adding "we should not wait for the time when there are more trash than fish in the ocean."

The newsman-turned-public servant, chair of the National Solid Waste Management Commission, issued the appeal after DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu declared that the country "is in the middle of a garbage crisis."

Cimatu, one-time chief of staff of the powerful Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), made the declaration amid government efforts to clean the historic but heavily-polluted Manila Bay.

Manila Bay is the repository of trash, including plastic materials, and untreated sewage from households and businesses in Metropolitan Manila and nearby provinces like Bulacan and Rizal.

Local government units (LGUs) play a crucial role in solid waste management, having been tasked to ensure proper waste segregation and disposal under Republic Act No. 9003.

In fact, the law requires LGUs to come up with their respective 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan and convert their open dumpsites into sanitary landfills, according to Antiporda.

Aside from legal responsibility, local government authorities, including barangay officials, have moral responsibility to stop the people from dumping their wastes into Manila Bay and other waterways.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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A16
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

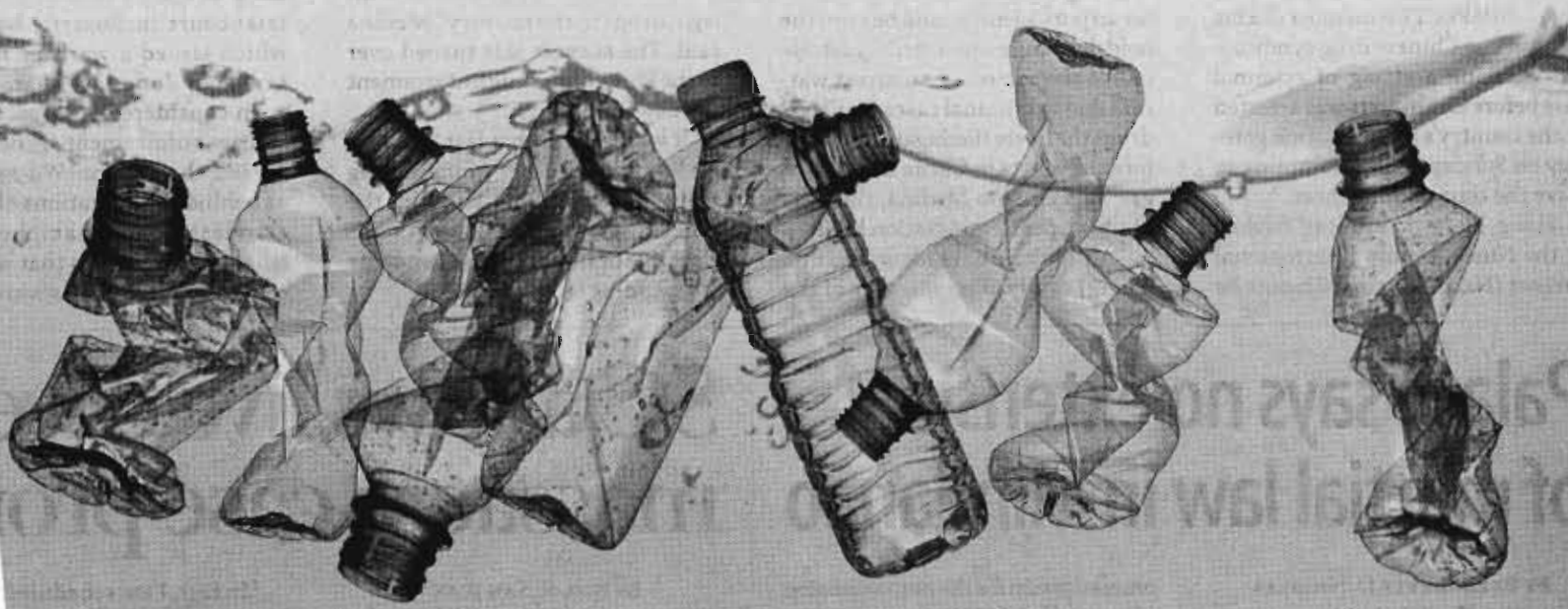
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DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

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



Return of Boracay fireworks sought

Iloilo City – A councilor of Malay town, Aklan province, is calling on the national government to allow a fireworks show to welcome the New Year at famous Boracay Island.

Councilor Nenette Aguirre Graf said she sponsored a resolution appealing for the lifting of the ban that has been in place after Boracay underwent massive rehabilitation since April 2018.

Graf explained Monday that fireworks had long been a tradition of the locals before Boracay tourism boom. When Boracay became popular, she noted how tourists

flock to see a dazzling spectacle fireworks show by the beach.

"Our loyal followers from all over the world are expecting this event every end of the year. It's a tradition where families and friends hug, couples kiss, children jump believing they can grow taller," Graf said.

Graf's resolution has been forwarded to the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG), which consists of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism (DOT),

and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Graf proposed to temporarily lift the fireworks ban between 11:30 p.m. of December 31, 2019 to 12:30 a.m. of January 1, 2020. As in previous years, the fireworks will be lighted from a barge off the coast and away from the corals.

This is not the first time a town councilor appealed to the inter-agency task force. Last year, there was a similar appeal. However, the inter-agency group did not act on it. Graf remains hopeful BIARMG will allow it for this year. **(Tara Yap)**

WATERWAY CLEARING OPERATION



RIVER WATCH Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso (right) checks a rusting barge on the Pasig River on Tuesday. —JOAN BONDOC

DENR ORDERS PASIG RIVER CLEARED OF IDLE BARGES

By Meg Adonis
@MegINQ

A day after the relaunching of the Pasig River Ferry Service, Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso on Tuesday led an inspection of moored barges as the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) issued a memorandum circular prohibiting the double berthing of vessels on the waterway.

Onboard a boat, Domagoso, accompanied by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Danilo Lim, discovered several barges—some

already rusting—"parked" on the river.

Based on Memorandum Order No. 2019-1011 issued by Cimatu, all public offices and officials concerned were ordered to clear the vital waterway of "all obstructions and blockages ... immediately."

In line with this, PCG Memorandum Order No. 05-07, which allowed double berthing on the Pasig River effective in 2007, was rescinded.

This meant that vessels would be allowed only to park on one side of the river to widen the space for traffic, prevent accidents and allow the smooth travel of ferry boat passengers.

Before the inspection,

Domagoso held a meeting at City Hall to discuss the rehabilitation of the 25-kilometer river. He said that in October, he asked the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) to ensure that the waterway would be kept clear.

On top of seven vessels found moored on the river, the PCG reported that there were also 14 illegal structures.

"If these are considered illegal structures, then they are obstructions [in the Pasig River] from the very beginning ... and we need to immediately remove them from the waterway," Domagoso said.

According to Tugade, the vessel owners would be given

three days to leave the river.

"Whether they like it or not, I think they should go back to the appropriated space for them by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA)... They are doing business there at the expense of the general public's safety and the environment, for that matter," Domagoso said.

The PPA said that it had instructed its officials to comply with the PCG order and that it would provide a barge holding area for the displaced vessels.

Lim added that the MMDA had deployed harvesters to clear the river of water hyacinths that could damage ferry boats. INQ



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



16
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

12-11-19

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 17

metro

EDITOR: **DULCE A. SANCHEZ**

WEDNESDAY | DECEMBER 11, 2019



Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim and Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade inspect barges moored along Pasig River yesterday. The officials ordered the clearing of informal settlers and other obstructions as part of the river's cleanup. **EDD GUMBAN**



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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A6
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

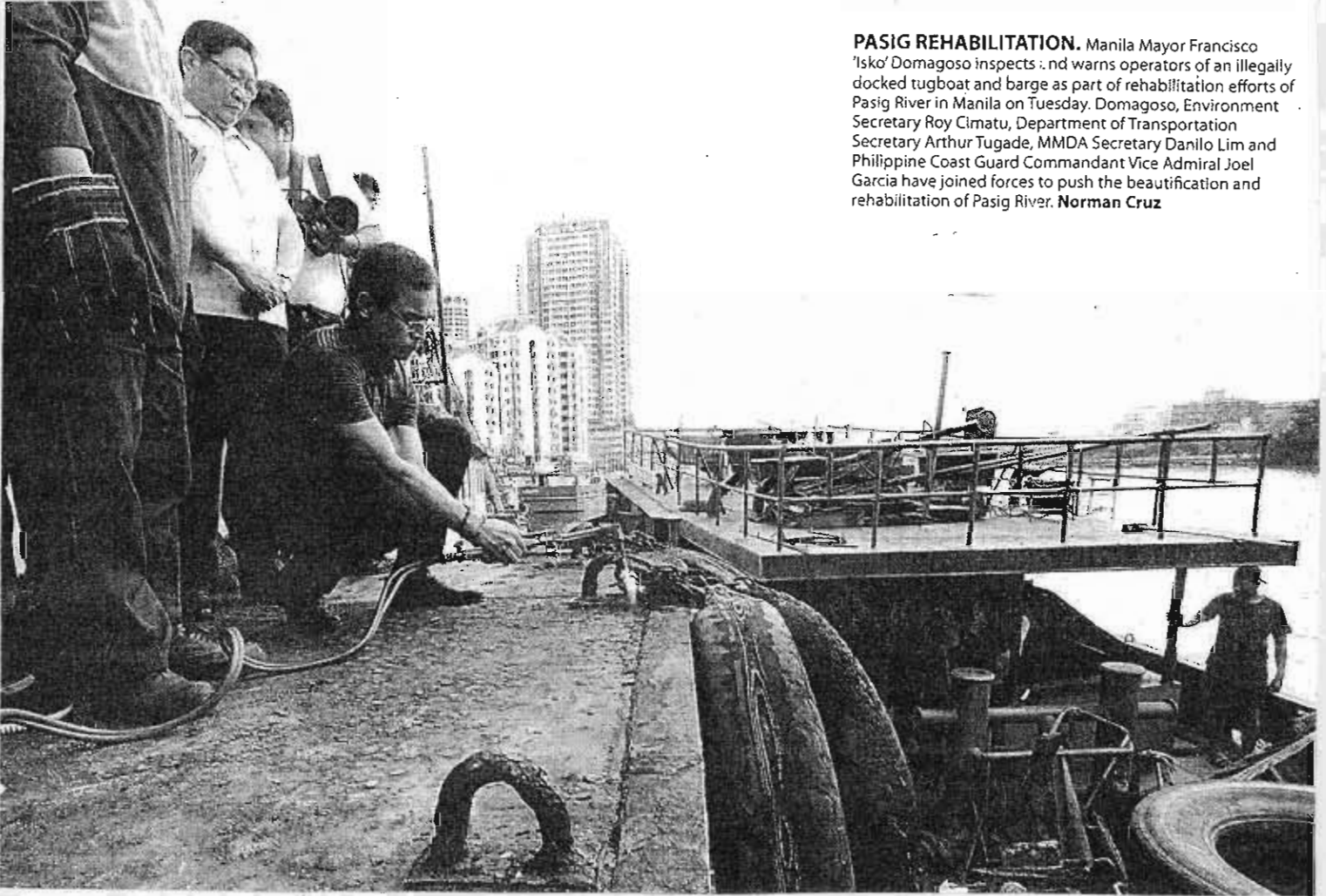
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12-11-19

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/



PASIG REHABILITATION. Manila Mayor Francisco 'Isko' Domagoso inspects and warns operators of an illegally docked tugboat and barge as part of rehabilitation efforts of Pasig River in Manila on Tuesday. Domagoso, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Department of Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, MMDA Secretary Danilo Lim and Philippine Coast Guard Commandant Vice Admiral Joel Garcia have joined forces to push the beautification and rehabilitation of Pasig River. **Norman Cruz**



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INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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MANILA BULLETIN
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PAGE



UPPER

LOWER



PAGE 1

STORY



BANNER

STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

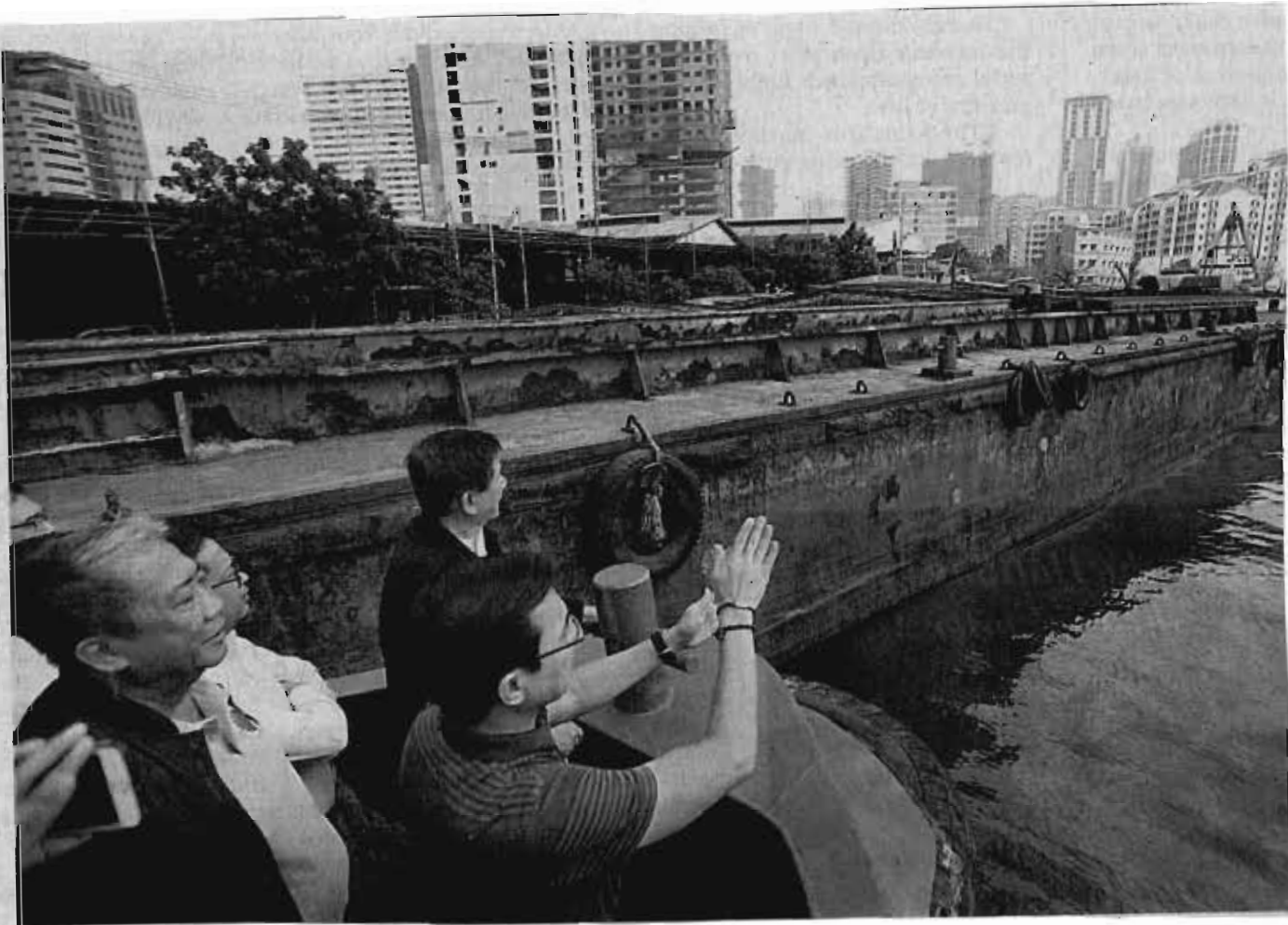
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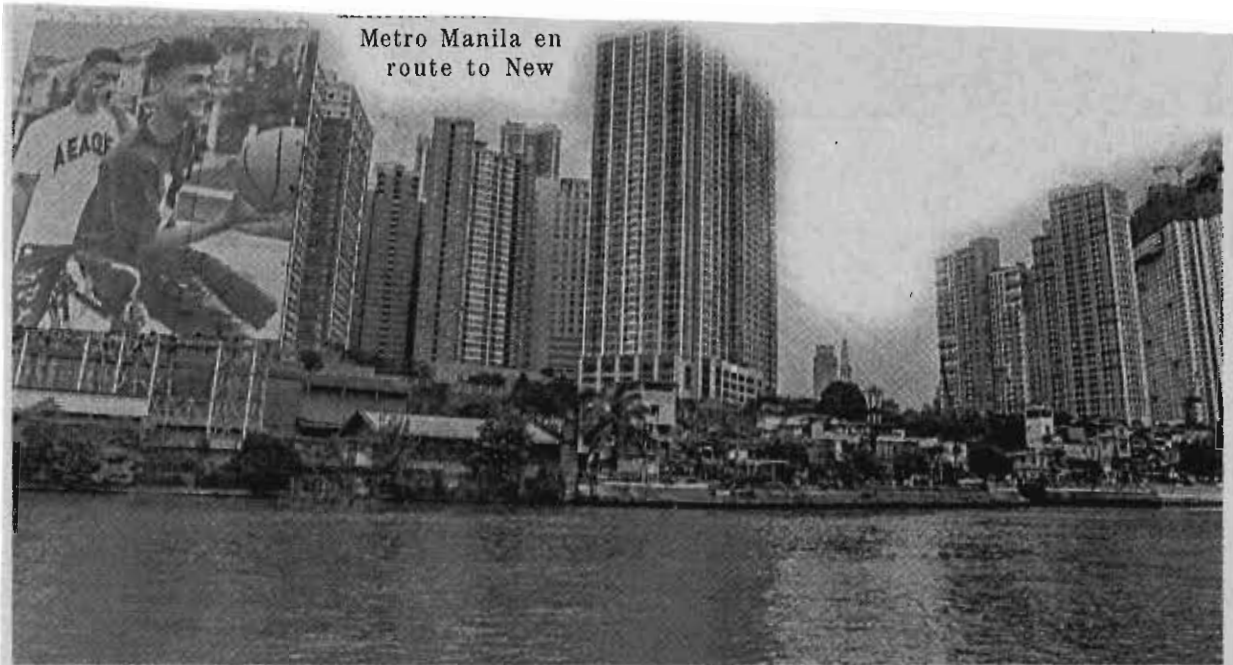
DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 17

BARGES IN PASIG RIVER — Top government officials remove illegally berthed barges from the Pasig River to make way for the river's clearing and rehabilitation. Barge operators were given three days to remove their barges or they will be fined. Inspecting Pasig River are Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim, and DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu. (Ali Vicoy)





Metro Manila en route to New

GUADALUPE side of the Pasig River is a sight to behold as government is slightly succeeding in its cleanup. ROMAN PROSPERO

Pasig River cleared

DoTr Secretary Arthur Tugade also ordered the removal of the abandoned and rotting barges at the river banks

By Pat C. Santos

A composite group of government agencies have started clearing obstructions in Pasig River on Tuesday, starting at the Del Pan Bridge to give way to the new ferry system that offers riding commuters options in their mobility.

The Departments of Transportation (DoTr), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Interior and Local Government, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine Ports

Authority took part in the inspection of sites at the Pasig River between the Jones Bridge and the Del Pan Bridge.

DoTr Secretary Arthur Tugade also ordered the removal of the abandoned and rotting barges at the river banks.

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno led the ceremonial torch cutting of the anchors to free up and move the barges away.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and MMDA chairman Danny Lim joined Tugade and Moreno during the inspection.



Putting water to good use

PASIG City has two rivers and one man-made canal – Pasig River, Marikina River and Manggahan Floodway – so it is both natural and practical that a reliable ferry system be developed to link it to the cities of Manila and Pasay.

Manila Bay is a natural marine resource shared by the province of Cavite and the National Capital Region (NCR), and since the phenomenal boom in population in Cavite over the past decade, land transportation between these two regions has become slow and inefficient.

The Department of Transportation (DOTr), in cooperation with the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the local government units concerned, has seen the light: because land transport has become constricted, we should try making use of the water.

Thus this week, perhaps not particularly planned, the ferry service in Manila Bay between Cavite City and the Cultural Center of the Philippines complex started its dry run Sunday, followed the next day, Monday, by the revival of the Pasig River ferry system from Pasig City to Plaza Lawton in Manila. Both passenger carriers in these bodies of water aim to slice some load off the jeepneys, buses and metro trains serving the metropolis.

‘The issue of safety can never be overemphasized here, because just one major tragedy at sea or in the river involving the new ferries will be enough for the public to lose its trust on the system, because of which it may never recover.’

Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade was all over the place, ensuring Sunday that the two ferries to be used in the Cavite-Manila run are safe and seaworthy. Expectedly, the P150 fare in these ferries is higher than the regular air-conditioned buses, thus Tugade was trying to negotiate for a lower fare. The consolation is that these ferries will serve the route for free until the end of January 2020, as Cavite folks adjust to their regular trips to their offices in Manila, and back.

The Pasig River ferries are also giving a month’s service for free to all passengers, and MMDA Chairman Danny Lim even broached the idea that if they had their way, and additional funding are found, they would operate the river ferries for free until the end of President Duterte’s term in 2022.

One thing going for both ferry services is the no-nonsense campaign of the Duterte administration to clean the waters of Manila Bay, including the Pasig River. With murky and dirty water, and especially its emission of foul odor, any water-based mass transportation in Metro Manila will be shunned by passengers. We hope that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will continue in ridding these two bodies of water of garbage and filth, and restore them to habitable levels for marine life.

The issue of safety can never be overemphasized here, because just one major tragedy at sea or in the river involving the new ferries will be enough for the public to lose its trust on the system, because of which it may never recover. Here is where Secretary Tugade’s experience and mettle will be most needed.



Clearing Pasig River of obstructions ordered

AN agreement had been reached to remove all obstruction at the Pasig River including informal settlers and barges and ships that had been dormant in the area as part of efforts to rehabilitate the major waterway.

The agreement was made during a meeting among Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant Admiral Joel Garcia, Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) OIC Administrator Vice Admiral Narciso Vingson Jr, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago and, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Danilo Lim.

Memorandum Order No. 1011 was issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to effect

the cleanup of trash and obstruction while the PCG said it will issue a memo disallowing double berthing in the river.

For his part, Moreno asked the owners to haul their barges and remove illegal structures. It was learned that there are 14 illegal structures.

The officials visited the Pasig River Delpan Bridge

and MacArthur Bridge going to Manila Bay where they saw barges, some of which were already worn out and no longer working, turning the river into a terminal.

The MMDA revived the Pasig River Ferry Service in a bid to resolve heavy traffic in Metro Manila. There will be 15 stations: Escolta, Lawton,

PUP-Sta. Mesa, Sta. Ana and Lambingan in Manila; Valenzuela and Guadalupe in Makati, Hulo in Mandaluyong and Maybunga, San Joaquin and Pinagbaha-

tan in Pasig. Three ferry stations will also be opened—Quinta Market in Manila, Circuit Makati in Makati and Kalawaan in Pasig. **Itchle Cabayan and Jerry S. Tan**



MANILA Mayor Isko Moreno and Transportation Secretary Art Tugade during their visit at the Pasig River. The concerned agencies including DENR and the MMDA agreed to rehabilitate the river by removing all obstructions in the waterway.

Photo by Jerry S. Tan



Pact to rid Pasig River of obstructions reached

AN agreement to remove all kinds of obstruction at the Pasig River such as barges and ships that had been dormant in the area and informal settlers had been reached as part of efforts toward its rehabilitation.

The said agreement was reached during a meeting among Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, Department of Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant Admiral Joel Garcia, Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) OIC Administrator Vice Admiral Narciso Vingson Jr, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago and Metro Ma-

nila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Danilo Lim.

In this light, memorandum order no. 1011 was issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to effect the cleanup of trash and obstruction while the PCG said it will issue a memo disallowing double berthing in the said river.

For his part, Moreno wrote the owners of said barges and illegal structures, ordering them to leave the Pasig River in the vicinity of which, it was learned, there are 14 illegal structures. He warned with appropriate action those who will not comply.

The said officials jointly visited the Pasig River Delpan Bridge up to McArthur



Mayor Isko Moreno with DoTr Sec. Arthur Tugade during a visit at the Pasig River. Photo by Jerry S. Tan

Bridge going to the Manila Bay where they saw barges, some of which are worn out and no longer working, turning the river into a terminal. Before this, the MMDA

revived the Pasig River Ferry Service as a solution to heavy traffic in Metro Manila, where free rides will be offered to the public up to January 31.



TRANSPORTATION Secretary Art Tugade, Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, Philippine Coast Guard commandant Admiral Joel Garcia, and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chairman Danilo Lim lead in clearing the Pasig River of all obstructions, Tuesday. (Ali Vicoy)



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Abante

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PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

12-11-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE



PINANGUNAHAN ni Manila Mayor Isko ang pag-acetylene sa mga lumang barge at iba pang ilegal na nakaparada sa Pasig River bilang pagsisimula ng pagtatanggal sa mga harang sa naturang ilog, katulong ang MMDA at DENR kahapon nang umaga. *(Jonas Sulit)*



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



12-11-19

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____



ISA-ISANG iniinspeksiyon nina Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim, DOTr Secretary Arthur Tugade, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, at Philippine Coast Guard commandant Vice Admiral Joel Garcia ang mga bulok at mga sirang barge na kanilang ipahahatak at aalisin dahil naglalabas ng polusyon at lumalason sa Ilog Pasig ang mga kalawang.

(BONG SON)



12-11-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Nakatenggang barge sa Jones Bridge, pinahahatak na

MATAPOS magsagawa ng inspeksyon ang lokal na pamahalaang lungsod at ilang opisyal ng gobyerno sa Pasig River, nagpadala naman ng liham si Manila Mayor Isko Moreno kay Acting Port Manager, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA)-PMO-NCR South Eligio Fortajada na alisin ang mga nakatenggang mga barge sa Jones Bridge, Escolta, Maynila.

Sa liham ni Moreno, nakiusap ito na alisin o hilahin ang pitong barge o lantsa na nakatengga sa Ilog Pasig lalo na at nakitaan ito ng maaring pagkakatamina ng tubig dahil sa sobrang kalawang.

Kasama ni Moreno sina Transportation Sec. Arthur Tugade, DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu, MMDA Chair Danny Lim sa pag-iinspeksyon na pawang mga dismayado sa nakita dahil bukod sa nangangalawang ay marumi pa ang barge na

nakakasama sa Ilog na nagdudulot ng dumi at polusyon.

Nagkaroon din ng symbolic na pag-acetelyn sa mga barge na hudyat ng pag-tow o paghatak sa barge.

Bukod sa mga barge, paalisin na rin ang mga informal settler na nakatira sa gilid ng ilog.

Ino-operate ang pitong barge ng Seavonne Ship Management, Inc. (tanker), Singel Transport, Inc., Tugmaster and Barge Pool Inc., Peninsula Gulf Marine Services Corp., Avega Brothers Shipping Corporation, Essahe Shipping Corp.

Nitong Lunes lamang inilunsad ang Pasig River Ferry Services (PRFS) sa Lawton Station sa Maynila na makakatulong upang mabawasan ang pagsisikip ng daloy ng trapiko sa mga lansangan.

(Jocelyn Domenden)



Barge, aalisin sa Ilog Pasig

Ang mga obstruction sa ilog ang unang alisin ng pamahalaan sa isasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Pasig River.

Ito ang napagkasunduan sa isinagawang pagpupulong kahapon ng umaga nina Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant Admiral Joel Garcia, Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) OIC Administrator Vice Admiral Narciso Vingson Jr, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago, Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Danilo Lim at Manila Mayor Isko Moreno.

Sa naturang pulong, nagkaisa ang mga opisyal na uunahing tanggalin ang iba't ibang uri ng harang sa Pasig River, gaya ng mga barge at barko na sobrang tagal nang natengga sa ilog, gayundin ang mga informal settlers na naninirahan doon.

Kaagad namang naglabas ng Memorandum Order No. 1011 ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na nag-aatas na linisin sa obstruction at mga basura ang paligid ng Pasig River, habang nag-isyu ang Coast Guard ng memo na nagsasabing paiiralin nila ang "single berthing", at

babawiin ang double berthing sa ilog.

Muli namang lumihap si Moreno sa mga may ilegal na barge o istruktura sa Pasig River, at inatasan ang mga ito na lisanin ang ilog.

Nabanggit din sa naturang pulong na mayroong 14 na illegal structures ang nasa Pasig River, kaya makikipag-ugnayan ang PCG sa PPA para maberipika ang mga permit ng mga ito.

Matapos ang pulong ay samasamang nag-inspeksyon ang mga opisyal sa Pasig River, mula sa Delpan Bridge hanggang McArthur Bridge, at patungong Manila Bay at dito nila nakita ang mga barge na mistulang nagteterminal na sa ilog Pasig.

Inakyat pa ng mga opisyal ang isang barge na nangangalawang at lumang-luma na.

Ayon kay Tugade, desidido sila na paalisin ang mga hindi awtorisadong vessel na naranatili sa Pasig River.

Nagbabala pa ang mga opisyal na hindi magdadalawang-isip na magsampa ng kaso sa mga taong patuloy na susuway o hindi tatalima sa clearing operations sa Ilog Pasig.

Nauna rito, binuhay ng MMDA ang Pasig River Ferry Service bilang solusyon sa matinding trapik sa Metro Manila.

Mary Ann Santiago



12-11-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Tenggang barge sa Jones Bridge ipinahahatak

MATAPOS magsagawa ng inspeksiyon ang lokal na pamahalaang lungsod at ilang opisyal ng gobyerno sa Pasig River, nagpadala ng liham si Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso kay Acting Port Manager, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA)-PMO-

NCR South Eligio For-tajada na alisin ang mga nakatenggang barge sa Jones Bridge, sa Escolta St., Sta. Cruz, Maynila.

Sa liham ni Mayor Isko, nakiusap siya na alisin o hilahin ang pitong barge o lantsa na nakatengga sa Ilog Pasig lalo't nakitaan na kontami-

nasyon sa tubig dahil sa sobrang kalawang.

Kasama ni Isko sina Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu, MMDA Chair Danny Lim sa inspeksyon na pawang desmayado sa nakita dahil bukod sa nanganalawang ay marumi ang barge na nakasasama sa ilog ang dulot na dumi at polusyon.

Nagkaroon din ng anyong ina-acetelyn ang mga barge na hudyat ng towoing o paghatak dito.

Bukod sa mga barge, paalisin na rin ang in-

formal settlers na nakatira sa gilid ng ilog.

Ino-operate ang pitong barge ng Seavonne Ship Management, Inc. (tanker), Singel Transport, Inc., Tugmaster and Barge Pool Inc., Peninsula Gulf Marine Services Corp., Avega Brothers Shipping Corp., Essahe Shipping Corp.

Nitong Lunes, inilunsad ang Pasig River Ferry Services (PRFS) sa Lawton Station sa Maynila na makatutulong upang mabawasan ang pagsisikip ng trapiko sa mga lansangan.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

12-11-10

TITLE:

PAGE 17

DATE

EXTRA INNING

Ex-Knight lifts AFP past Malacañang-PSC

Defending champion Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) rode on another torrid shooting from Boyet Bautista to subdue Malacañang-Philippine Sports Commission 77-65 and clinch an outright semis berth in the 8th UNTV Cup over the weekend at the San Juan City gym.

The former Letran star scored all of his 24 points from three-point zone apart from posting five boards, three steals and two assists as the Cavaliers recovered from a shock defeat to Judiciary the last time.

As they hiked their record to 7-1, the Cavaliers will still advance to the semis even if they drop their last assignment in the second round of the elims as the Kamao fell to 5-3 — the same record of National Housing Authority.

Newcomer Department of Environment and Natural Resources still leads the standings with an immaculate 6-0 mark in the event organized by UNTV president and CEO Dr. Daniel Razon.

The Judiciary Magis continued their rise as they clobbered the Phill-fealth Plus 112-86 to move to a share of fifth place place with Department of Agriculture and PITC.

The NHA Builders likewise kept their bid for the second outright semis berth with a 71-63 win over the PITC Global Traders.



Bautista lifts AFP Cavaliers past PSC five in UNTV Cup

Games Sunday (San Juan City gym)
2 p.m. - NHA vs PhilHealth
3:30 p.m. - Judiciary vs Agriculture
5 p.m. - PITC vs DENR

DEFENDING champion Armed Forces of the Philippines rode on another torrid shooting from Boyet Bautista to subdue Malacañang-Philippine Sports Commission, 77-65, to clinch an outright semis berth in the 8th UNTV Cup held over the weekend at the San Juan City gym.

The 5-foot-7 former Letran star scored all his 24 points from three-point zone apart from posting five boards, three steals and two assists as the Cavaliers recovered from a shock defeat to Judiciary the last time.

As they hiked their record to 7-1, the Cavaliers will still advance automatically to semis even if they drop their last assignment in the second round of the elims as the Kamao fell to 5-3 - the same record of National Housing Authority.

Newcomer Department of Environment and Natural Resources still leads the standings with an immaculate 6-0 mark in the event organized by UNTV President and CEO Dr. Daniel Razon for public servants.

The Judiciary Magis continued their rise as they clobbered the PhilHealth Plus, 112-86, to move to a share of fifth to seventh places with Department of Agriculture and PITC.

Christopher dela Cruz starred for the Magis this time, scoring 9 of his 24 points in the first half thaw the two-time champions erect a 61-35 advantage.

The NHA Builders likewise kept their bid for the second outright semis berth with a 71-63 win over the PITC Global Traders in the event offering P4 million to the chosen charity of the champion team.

Four NHA players scored in double figures with Michael Dizon leading the way with 17 points.



Cavaliers clinch semis slot

DEFENDING champion Armed Forces of the Philippines rode on the torrid shooting of Boyet Bautista to subdue Malacañang-

Philippine Sports Commission 77-65 and clinch an outright semis berth in the 8th UNTV Cup over the weekend at the San Juan City gym.

The 5-foot-7 former Letran star scored all his 24 points from the three-point zone on top of five boards, three steals and two assists as the Cavaliers recovered from a shock defeat to Judiciary the last time out.

With a 7-1 record, the Cavaliers will still advance automatically to the semis even if they drop their last assignment in the second round of the eliminations as the Kamao slipped to 5-3, the same record of National Housing Authority.

Newcomer Department of Environment and Natural Resources still leads the standings with an

GAMES SUNDAY
(San Juan City gym)
2 p.m. - NHA vs. PhilHealth
3:30 p.m. - Judiciary vs. Agriculture
5 p.m. - PITC vs. DENR

immaculate 6-0 mark in the event organized by UNTV President and CEO Dr. Daniel Razon for public servants.

The Judiciary Magis continued their rise as they clobbered the PhilHealth Plus 112-86 to move to a share of fifth to seventh places with Department of Agriculture and PITC.

Christopher dela Cruz starred for the Magis, scoring 9 of his 24 points in the first half that saw the two-time champions erect a 61-35 advantage.

The NHA Builders also kept their bid for the second outright semis berth with a 71-63 win over the PITC Global Traders in the event offering P4 million to the chosen charity of the champion team.

Four NHA players scored in double figures with Michael Dizon leading the way with 17 points.



PROENVIRONMENT

PANEL OKS BILL TAXING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

By DJ Yap
@deejayapINQ

The House tax-writing panel approved on Tuesday a bill imposing a P20 excise for every kilogram of single-use plastic bags in a fresh bid to reduce the environmental impact of such solid wastes on the planet's ecosystems.

Though the new tax would have a "minimal impact" of seven centavos per piece of "sando plastic bag," the House ways and means committee chair, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, said it would generate P4.8 billion in revenue in the first year of implementation.

That is based on an estimated 248 million kilograms of single-use plastic bags, which have been blamed for detrimental and hazardous effects on marine and terrestrial life.

House Bill No. 178, authored by Sultan Kudarat Rep. Horacio Suansing Jr. and Nueva Ecija Rep. Estrellita Suansing, imposes the specific excise tax on single-use bags that shall be collected "upon removal from factory."

Salceda said 100 percent of revenue collections would be earmarked for solid waste management and implementation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. INQ



House passes measure taxing single-use plastic

By **EDU PUNAY**

The House ways and means committee has approved a bill seeking to tax single-use plastic bags.

During the deliberations yesterday, the panel chaired by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda voted to pass on first reading House Bill [HB] 178, which seeks to impose a P20 tax per kilogram of plastic bags.

The measure was authored by Reps. Horacio Suansing Jr. of Sultan Kudarat and Estrelita Suansing of Nueva Ecija.

The panel modified the amount of tax originally proposed in the bill, which was

10 per piece of plastic bag produced in factories or released from import warehouses.

"Aside from the short- and long-term consequences of plastics on the environment and on the health of humans and animals alike, the mass consumption of plastics in the Philippine further magnifies the flooding problem that Filipinos experience, especially during the typhoon season," read the bill.

Salceda said the proposed measure, once enacted, could raise P4.8 billion in revenues for the government during the first year of implementation.

"This is just the first step.

The next is a tax on primary plastic packaging, especially sachet that accounts for two-thirds of solid waste and garbage," Salceda said.

He said the panel decided to defer the proposed tax on other plastic materials due to possible inflation on the prices of food and other basic commodities such as shampoo and toothpaste.

Salceda said the additional measure could be considered after three years once the poverty rate drops down to single digit.

The measure will now be referred to the plenary for second and third readings.

- With Rhodina Villanueva



GOTCHA

JARIUS BONDOC



Game changer: Phl largest city leads ban on single-use materials

Quezon City, the country's most populous, will ban single-use materials from business establishments starting next year. To be totally removed from supermarkets, restaurants, and hotels, are one-time use plastic and paper bags, plates, bottles, cups, cutlery, straws, drink stirrers, sachets, and styrofoam packs. The materials are highly pollutive and pile up garbage.

QC is not the first city to forbid the earth-unfriendly items. But having a population of 2.94 million (2015 census) and the third widest expanse, it can be a game changer. QC's success will spur the 135 other cities and 82 provinces to follow suit. The garbage crisis that the environment department recently declared will begin to be solved. The Philippines' shameful ranking as the world's third biggest polluter of oceans, next to China and Indonesia, can be corrected.

QC is landlocked. But sitting on a vast plateau from which rivers flow down, it contributes to trash draining to Manila Bay and Laguna de Bai. Water is life. Plastic and styro wastes clog up sewers and streams, cause deadly floods, and choke fish, corals and other marine life.

Environment groups hail QC's expansive ban. "These are concrete steps taken by the city government to prevent plastic bags and single-use materials from entering the waste stream, thus lessening the possibility of these ever reaching bodies of water," said Mayor Joy Belmonte. "It takes a concerted effort from all stakeholders to prevent this problem from escalating... We hope you will continue to partner with the city government to advance our advocacies on climate change, sustainability, and environment care."

The ban comes in two ordinances. Introduced by Councilor Dorothy Delarmente, both unanimously were approved by the 35 other council members:

Ordinance 2868, effective Jan. 1, 2020, shall prohibit distribution and use of plastic bags and single-use containers in malls, supermarkets, pharmacies, and other wet and dry retail outlets. Primary target is the notorious sheer "sando" bag. One year thereafter paper bags shall also be banned. It supersedes, as planned since 2012, QC's withholding of plastic grocery bags unless the customer pays P2 "green fee".

Ordinance 2876, effective Feb. 1, 2020, shall prohibit distribution and use of plastic, paper, and styro containers in restaurants, bars, hotels, resorts, and similar outlets. Covered are dine-in serving of throwaway plastic bottles, cups, plates, forks, spoons, knives, straws, and stirrers. As well, single-use sachets for drinks, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and toothpaste in hotel rooms.

Fines and penalties for violations are stiff: P1,000 for the first offense; P3,000, suspension of Environmental Clearance, and issuance of Cease and Desist Order for the second; and P5,000, revocation of Business Permit, and issuance of Closure Order for the third. Those are in accord with the Local Government Code.

Given the huge number of businesses covered, the ban looks unenforceable. Yet Belmonte is optimistic. The city council held four consultations with affected outlet owners. Getting their consensus was crucial. Example was the first ordinance. After seven years of regulating plastic grocery bags, only few customers conscientiously brought their own reusable woven sacks, "bayong" or

"katsa". Green Fund collections reached P316 million. Belmonte, Delarmente and other councilors contemplated raising the green fee to P10 per bag. But storeowners themselves opted to do away with plastic bags altogether. They believe that caring for the earth requires lifestyle and habit changes.

Chain restaurateurs and hoteliers also see savings in the ban on throwaway plastics and sachets. It would be more economical to use washable utensils. Personal straws are in vogue among environment-conscious citizens. Bathroom products can be dispensed from containers screwed to walls. Note, however, that some manufacturers deliberately slash prices of "tingê" at corner stores so, say, a five-gram shampoo comes out much cheaper than buying 500 grams. Those makers are cheating the public. If exposed and boycotted, they'd learn lessons the hard way. The EcoWaste Coalition has "Kalabasa Awards" for such deceitful market items.

Conversely, identifying the good ones encourages others to follow. Interviewed on "Sapol" radio show last Sat., Belmonte cited, without personally endorsing, the distribution by Macao Imperial Milk Tea of reusable tumblers, yet keeping its prices at par with competitors. (I don't drink milk tea nor know Macao brand.)

Gradual imposition of bans also assures compliance, Belmonte said. Businesses must be given time to prepare their alternatives. Ordinance 2868 was enacted mid-2019; Ordinance 2876, in early Oct. Store, eatery and resort managers were given ample adjustment periods.

Single-use materials are filling up QC landfills. Andrea Villaroman, director for Environmental Protection and Waste Management, reported that plastic bags make up 16 cubic meters or one truckload per day. Plastic cutlery adds another 10 cubic meters or a mini-dump truck daily. Business establishments, not residences, generate that trash.

About two-dozen Philippine cities and provinces have banned or regulated single-use packaging. Their local executives had studied the wasteful sourcing of plastic and styrene from coal, petroleum and gas. Pollutive production methods contribute to greenhouse gases, so worsen climate change, leading to draughts and super-typhoons. Aside from causing floods and killing marine and land food sources, the materials take centuries to biodegrade, if at all.

Among the first green locales are: Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Pasay and Pasig in Metro Manila; Baguio City, Benguet; El Nido, Palawan; Boracay Isle, Malay, Aklan; City of San Fernando, Pampanga; San Fernando City, La Union; Bayambang, Villasis, Labrador, Rosales, San Carlos, Asingan, Binalonan, Laoac, Alcala, Umingan, Bautista, and Natividad in Pangasinan; Cebu City Hall; Bacolod City, Negros Occidental; government offices in Negros Oriental; Pilar in Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte; and the pioneer of them all, Los Baños, Laguna.

Bills pend in both houses of Congress to ban single-use plastics nationwide.

Catch *Sapol* radio show, Saturdays, 8-10 a.m., DWIZ (882-AM).

Gotcha archives: www.philstar.com/columns/134276/gotcha



House OKs ₱20/kilo excise tax on plastic

By CHARISSA M. LUCI-ATIENZA

The House Committee on Ways and Means approved on Tuesday a bill seeking to impose ₱20 excise tax for every kilo of plastic used for packaging, excluding sachets.

After more than one- ►11

House OKs ₱20/kilo ... 1◀

hour of deliberation, the House panel, chaired by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda unanimously passed House Bill No. 178, with amendments.

It was North Cotabato Rep. Jose Tejada who moved for the approval of the amended HB 178. The motion was seconded by Galing sa Puso partylist Rep. Jose Gay Padiernos.

"Now, it is not just single-use plastic bag, it's all plastic used for packaging except for sachet," said Nueva Ecija Rep. Estrellita Suansing who authored HB 178 with her husband Sultan Kudarat Rep. Horacio Suansing Jr. after the Salceda panel approved the amended version of their bill.

"The excise tax is increased to P20 per kilogram from ₱10," she said.

HB 178 originally sought to impose ₱10 excise tax for every kilo of single-use plastic bag removed from the place of production or released from the customs house.

But, during the second hearing on HB 178, the Salceda panel decided to impose higher excise tax on all plastics used for packaging.

"We will tax anything that is used for packaging," Salceda said, before passing the bill.

He explained that under the bill, the specific excise tax imposed shall "be collected upon removals from factory."

The House leader said the proposed imposition of ₱10 excise tax for every kilo of plastics used for packaging would generate ₱4.8 billion in revenues for the government.

"This will generate ₱4.8 billion in revenues during the first year of implementation," he said.

During the hearing, it was disclosed that the daily plastic consumption in the country is pegged at 96 million.

The Salceda panel also agreed to allocate 100 percent of the revenues to the Solid Waste Management Fund.

"One-hundred percent of the rev-

enues shall be earmarked for solid waste management and implementation of Republic Act 9003 [the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000]," Salceda said.

Suansing noted that neighboring countries, including Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Cambodia impose heavy tax on single-use plastic bag per piece.

"In Hongkong, it's ₱3.25. In Indonesia, it's ₱18. In Malaysia, it's ₱2.44 per piece and ₱5 in Cambodia per piece," she noted.

She insisted that the levy on the plastic bag "should be source-based" instead of "at point of sale" as suggested by the Retailers Association, after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) expressed apprehension that the manufacturers would produce more thin film plastics.

"The suggestion of the Retailers Association is it should be at point of sale. We are telling that it should be at source, that is why it is excise tax. The DENR is worried that manufacturers will make thinner plastics to increase the quantity per kilo. What we are going to do is we will put a thickness, and that it should not be lower than [the prescribed] thickness," Suansing said.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda relayed to the Salceda panel that the DENR is trying to discourage the use of thin film plastics.

Benjamin Chua, who represents the 150 companies producing plastic bags in the country, opposed the tax measure.

"Unless there is better alternative to plastics, we don't think there is a need to slap a levy on it. If ever there is a levy, we think it is discriminatory," he said, adding that even other packaging options should be taxed.

"Plastic is not evil," Chua stressed.

Salceda assured Chua that "not a single peso of your profit will be affected because you will pass it on to the consumers."



House panel backs plastic tax bill for plenary okay

BY JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ @joveemarie

THE House Committee on Ways and Means on Tuesday endorsed for plenary approval the measure imposing an excise tax on single-use plastic, which could generate additional revenues of P4.8 billion for the government.

Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, the panel chairman, said the substitute bill will impose a levy of P20 per kilo on single-use plastic bags used in supermarkets, malls, shops, stores, sales outlets and similar

establishments. "The proposal also seeks to impose a P0.07 per piece of sando plastic bag with minimal impact or P4.8 billion [revenues for the government] on the first year of implementation," Salceda.



"It's [tax on single-use plastic] just the first step. The next step is a tax on primary plastic packaging, especially sachets, since it accounts for two-thirds of solid waste and garbage."—Salceda

Under the bill, 100 percent of the revenue will be earmarked for solid waste management and the implementation of Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

House Committee on Ways and Means Vice Chairman Estrellita Suansing of Nueva Ecija, principal author of the bill, said the measure seeks to encourage the exploration and utilization of environment-

friendly alternatives to single-use plastic bags.

Also, Suansing said the revenue from this proposal could be used to finance programs and projects to counter the harmful effects of plastic pollution in the country.

"It is a known fact that plastic bags contaminate soil and waterways. Based on available data, 4 to 5 trillion plastic bags are utilized worldwide each year, and billions of these end up as litter," she said.

"These are, likewise, toxic to both humans and animals, especially, when accidentally ingested. Plastic marine debris have been documented to harm at least 267 species, among which are sea turtles and dolphins," Suansing added.

SEE "PLASTIC," A2

Plastic. . .

CONTINUED FROM A12

In a separate interview, Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management Benny Antiporda called on Congress to impose taxes first on plastic residuals and sachets as these constitute majority of garbage in the country's landfills.

Next step

SALCEDA said the committee will also study the feasibility of imposing excise tax on sachet packaging.

"It's [tax on single-use plastic] just the first step. The next step is a tax on primary plastic packaging, especially sachets, since it accounts for two-thirds of solid waste and garbage," he said.

"We deferred that due to possible food inflation and prices of basic commodities like shampoo and toothpaste. However, if poverty goes [down to a] single digit, we will include it possibly in three

to four years," Salceda added.

Killing the industry

EARLIER, Philippine Plastics Industry Association Inc. (PPIA) President Willy Go said the proposal will hurt and eventually kill the industry.

Go also appealed to the House to consider the economic impact of the bill imposing excise tax on single-use plastic bags produced in the Philippines.

He said members of the industry are currently hurting from local ordinances that banned the use of plastic bag in their areas. Several local government units have already issued ordinances against the single-use plastic bags.

Philippine Amalgamated Supermakets Association President Steven Cua said the proposal might affect the economy.

Cua said big supermarkets can comply with the proposal but it will be difficult for small stores, which use thin single-use plastic bags.



12-11-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

House OK's move to impose tax on single-use plastic bags

By Maricel V. Cruz

A COMMITTEE in the House of Representatives approved on Tuesday a bill that sets a P20 excise tax on every kilo of single-use plastic bags removed from the place of production or the Bureau of Customs warehouse where it was taken for storage after importation.

Rep. Joey Salceda, chairman of the House committee on ways and means, said House Bill 781 will not only generate funds for the government but will also discourage the use of plastic bags that have always been blamed for clogging waterways, thus causing floods during downpours.

Salcedo said that once signed into law, some P4.8 billion will be collected on the first year from its implementation alone.

He added that once enacted, seven centavos will be added to the cost of every plastic sando bag.

Only single-use plastic bags were included on the list of the pollutive materials to be taxed because imposing levies on other types of plastic packaging materials like sachets may trigger an increase in the price of food and basic commodities like shampoo and toothpaste.

"This is just the opening salvo. The next step is a tax on primary plastic packaging especially sachets since it accounts for 66 percent of solid waste and garbage," Salceda said.

All of the revenue collected from the excise tax on single-use plastic bags will be given to the solid waste management fund provided under Section 46 of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

At least 15 bills regulating or banning products made of single-use plastics have been pending before the House Committee on Ecology, while similar proposals are also being tackled in the Senate.



12-11-19

LINE:

PAGE 17

DATE

Excise tax on plastics greenlighted

By Keith Calayag
@tribunephil_hana

The House Committee on Ways and Means yesterday approved the bill that would impose excise tax on single-use plastics.

The approval came a week after the said panel began its discussion on House Bill 178 filed by Sultan Kudarat 2nd District Rep. Horacio Suansing Jr. and Nueva Ecija 1st District Rep. Estrellita Suansing.

During the hearing, the panel amended the bill to impose P20 excise tax per kilo of single-use plastics. The bill originally proposed P10 excise tax per kilo.

According to panel chairman Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, a total of P4.8 billion in revenue is expected to be collected from taxes in the first year of the implementation of the bill.

During the hearing, the panel also considered including primary plastic packaging, including sachets, among

those that will be taxed.

However, it was deferred due to possible inflation on food and prices of basic commodities.

The taxes that will be collected from single use plastics will be earmarked for the implementation of the Solid Waste Management Act.

The approval of the bill came after President Rodrigo Duterte expressed interest to ban use of plastic nationwide in a bid to mitigate climate change.



Plastic shopping bag tax measure hurdles panel to raise P4.8 billion

THE House Committee on Ways and Means approved a bill calling for a P20 per kilogram tax on single-use plastic shopping bags Tuesday, a measure intended to raise P4.8 billion to fund the enforcement of the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

House Bill 178, which if signed into law will become the Single-Use Plastic Bag Tax Act, seeks to encourage the "exploration and utilization of environment-friendly alternatives" and generate additional revenue for the government by imposing an excise tax on single-use plastic bags.

According to the committee's Chairman, Jose Ma. Clemente S. Salceda, the target revenue for this measure is P4.8 billion which is "100% earmarked" for solid waste management and implementation of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"It's just the first step. The next step is a tax on primary plastic packaging especially sachets since they account for 2/3 of solid waste and garbage" Mr. Salceda said in a Viber message to reporters, adding that the Committee deferred the next step due to "possible food inflation and prices of basic commodities."

He said a tax on sachets could be revisited in "three or four years" particularly if poverty levels drop, easing the potential burden on poorer consumers who buy commodities in smaller quantities. — **Genshen L. Espedido**



House panel OKs bill taxing single-use plastics

By Jester Manalastas

IN a bid to eliminate single-use plastic, a House panel approved a measure that seeks to impose higher excise tax on every kilo of plastic bag removed from the place of production or the Customs warehouses.

According to chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, the revenue on the tax measure could go as high as P4.8 billion a year and it is environment-friendly.

Under House bill 781, per one kilo of single-use plastic removed from the place of production or the Customs warehouse will be charged with P20 excise tax.

"The specific excise tax will be collected upon removals from factory," Salceda clarified.

Meanwhile, the proposed law has a minimal impact of P0.07 on sando plastic bags, if they decided to tax single-use plastic carriers because taxing other types of plastics, especially sachets, may trigger an increase in the price of food and basic

commodities like shampoo and toothpaste.

"It's just the first step. The next step is a tax on primary plastic packaging especially sachets since it accounts for 2/3 of solid waste and garbage. We deferred that due to possible food inflation and prices of basic commodities eg shampoo toothpaste. However if poverty goes single digit, we will include it possibly in three to four years," Salceda added.

When it comes to revenues, Salceda said the bill provides that the 100 percent of the collections from the measure will be earmarked to the solid waste management fund provided under Section 46 of Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

At least 15 bills regulating or banning products made of single-use plastics have been pending before the House Committee on Ecology, while similar proposals are also being tackled in the Senate.

One of the authors, Nueva Ecija Rep. Estrellita Suansing cited 2015 re-

port which showed that Philippines ranked as the third leading source of plastic materials pollut-

ing oceans, while more than 8.3 billion metric tons of plastic have been produced since the early 1950.



12-11-19

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

Single-use plastic papatawan ng buwis

Aprubado na ng House Committee on Ways and Means ang pagpapataw ng P20 excise tax kada kilo sa mga single-use plastic simula Enero 2020.

Layunin ng House Bill 178 na mabawasan ang paggamit ng plastic at mahikayat ang publiko sa pagre-recycle.

Sinabi ni House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Joey Salceda, na kabilang na rin sa bubuwisan ang mga plastic sachets gayundin ang lahat ng mga plastics na ginagamit sa packaging.

Sakaling maging batas ay makakalikom ang gobyerno ng P4.8 bilyon revenue na gagamitin sa mga programa at proyekto ng ecological solid waste management.

Kaya ibig sabihin nito may dagdag na .07 sentimo sa kada single use plastic na bibilihin ng publiko.

Samantala, iminungkahi naman ni Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na isama rin sa dapat na buwisan ang mga biodegradable plastics dahil ito ay gawa sa micro-plastics na mas delikado sa kalusugan at kapaligiran. (*Gemma Garcia*)



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
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Abante TONITE

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4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

12-11-19

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE





Lusot na sa House panel

EXCISE TAX SA SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

INAPRUBAHAN na sa House Committee on Ways and Means ang pagpapataw ng excise tax sa mga single-use plastic.

Sa ilalim ng inaprubahang House Bill 178, papatawan ng P20 excise tax ang kada kilo ng single-use plastics simula Enero 2020.

Ayon kay House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Joey

Salceda, kasama na rin sa bubuwisan ang lahat ng plastics na ginagamit sa packaging.

Kung maipatutupad ito ay makalilikom ang gobyerno ng P4.8 billion na gagamitin naman para sa mga programa at proyekto ng ecological solid waste management.

Mangangahulugan ito ng dagdag na P.07 sa kada single-use plastic na bibilhin ng publiko.

Naniniwala naman si Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Usec. Benny Antiporda na sa halip na makabawas sa plastic ay baka makahikayat pa ito sa dagdag na produksiyon ng residual plastics.

Tutol din ang Philippine Plastic Industry Association sa panukala dahil pinangangailangan nila ang pagbaba ng con-

sumption ng plastic kung bubuwisan ito.

Nilinaw naman ni Salceda na hindi maaapektuhan ang demand sa plastic dahil mababa lang ito kung bubuwisan at hindi rin mga manufacturer ang papatawan nito.

Layunin ng panukala na mabawasan ang paggamit ng plastic at mahikayat ang publiko sa pagre-recycle.

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PAGE 1
STORY



BANNER
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₱20 buwis sa bawat kilo ng plastic, inilarga ng Kamara

Inaprubahan ng House Committee on Ways and Means ang panukalang batas na nagpapataw ng P20 excise tax para sa bawat kilo ng plastic na ginamit sa packaging, hindi kasama ang sachets.

Matapos ang isang oras na deliberasyon, nagkakaisang ipinasa ng House panel, pinamumunuan ni Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, ang House Bill No. 178, na may amendments.

Ang HB 178 ay pangunahing inakda nina Nueva Ecija Rep. Estrellita

Suansing at Sultan Kudarat Rep. Horacio Suansing Jr.

Orihinal na hinihiling ng bill na magpataw ng P10 excise tax para sa bawat kilo ng single-use plastic bag na inalis mula sa lugar ng produksiyon o inilabas mula sa customs house. Ngunit, nagpasya ang panel na magpataw ng mas mataas na excise tax sa lahat ng plastics na ginamit para sa packaging.

"We will tax anything that is used for packaging," ani Salceda, bago ipasa

ang panukala.

Sinabi niya na ang panukalang pagpataw ng P10 excise tax para sa bawat kilo ng plastic na ginamit para sa packaging ay lilikom ng P2.4 bilyon revenues para sa pamahalaan.

"This will generate P2.4 billion in revenues," banggit niya.

Nagkasundo rin ang panel na maglaan ng 100 porsiyento ng revenues sa Solid Waste Management Fund.

Charissa M. Luci-Atienza

WATER FIRMS WAIVING P10.8-BILLION AWARD

STORY BY THE INQUIRER STAFF

Manila Water and Maynilad are no longer seeking payment from the government of the amount awarded to them by an international court. They are also willing to renegotiate their contracts and to defer higher rates scheduled for Jan. 1.

By Melvin Gascon,
Dona Z. Pazzibugan,
Julie M. Aurelio
and Ronnel W. Domingo
@Team_Inquirer



MANILA WATER
CARE IN EVERY DROP



Maynilad

Facing threats of imprisonment, charges of economic sabotage and even expropriation from President Duterte, officials of the country's two biggest water concessionaires have finally backed down.

On Tuesday, they said they would no longer seek to collect from the government close to P11 billion that an international arbitration court had awarded to them for foregone revenue from higher rates that they were unable to implement.

Manila Water and Maynilad executives also said at a hearing in the House of Representatives that they were open to renegotiating the supposed "onerous" provisions of their water concession agreements with the government to distribute water in Metro Manila and Cavite and Rizal provinces.

Reading from separate statements, Manila Water president Jose Rene Almendras and Maynilad president Ramoncito Fernandez said they were ready to cooperate with the government in striking a new deal, without the "onerous" provisions.

The House committees on good government and public accounts on Tuesday held their first hearing on the 1997 water concession agreements, days after Mr. Duterte lashed out at the two water firms for "economic plunder."

The Singapore-based Permanent Court of Arbitration ordered the Philippine government

last month to pay Manila Water P7.4 billion from "actual losses" for the refusal of the regulator, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), to allow the water concessionaire to raise water rates over the past several years.

Maynilad won its own case in 2017 in the arbitration court, which directed the government to pay it P3.4 billion.

'Gracious manifestation'

The firms invoked a stipulation in their contracts that barred the government from interfering in the setting of rates, one of the provisions that Mr. Duterte said were disadvantageous to the government and public.

"This is a very positive development," Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said of the

firms' new position.

"Although the President has said that the government will not pay these arbitral awards, at least during his term anyway, this gracious manifestation on the part of the water concessionaires nonetheless removes a potential liability from the books of account of the government," he added.

Habeas corpus

Guevarra, however, stressed that the government was more concerned about removing the lopsided provisions in the concession agreements.

The issue of paying the arbitral award, he said, was "not as important as ensuring that disputes arising from burdensome provisions of the water concession agreements will never hap-

Reading from separate statements,
Manila Water president Jose Rene Almendras
and Maynilad president Ramoncito Fernandez
said they were ready to cooperate
with the government in striking a new deal,
without the 'onerous' provisions

pen again in the future."

Even as he was already aware of the water firms dropping their compensation claims, Mr. Duterte is still bent on pursuing action against Manila Water and Maynilad.

The President on Tuesday said he might resort to taking over water distribution and treatment operations in Metro Manila should he be unsatisfied with the firms' explanation of the contracts.

He said he would even suspend the writ of habeas corpus to compel the owners of the water firms and government lawyers who crafted the contracts to talk to him.

Defer rate increases

Anakalusugan Rep. Mike Defensor echoed the President's statement in wanting to nullify the water concession contracts.

"[It is the duty of Congress now to] give the ammunition to executive to process all the provisions and look into and strike a compromise with the concessionaires," he said.

In addition to no longer pursuing its collection of the P7.4 billion arbitral award, Manila Water is willing to defer rate increases scheduled for next month, according to Almendras.

It will also cooperate

P-2

FROM A2

with the government for a renegotiation of some provisions of the agreement that the Department of Justice has questioned, he said.

"We are complying with the orders President Duterte to review some provisions of the

concession agreement," Almendras said.

Accra law office

Fernandez said the company was also willing to sit down with the government in delaying the water rate increase previously approved by the MWSS.

The House committee will invite former officials of the MWSS and the Office of the

Solicitor General, as well as lawyers of the Angara Abello Concepcion Regala and Cruz (Accra) law office, who reportedly stood for the government in the failed arbitration case, and were supposedly responsible for the "onerous" provisions in the concession agreements.

The MWSS, meanwhile, has asked Maynilad and Manila Water to submit comments on

the agreements.

Manila Water "has received a letter from the administrator of the [MWSS, Emmanuel B. Salamat], asking the company to submit its comments and positions on certain provisions of the concession agreements entered into by the MWSS with the company and with Maynilad," the Ayala group subsidiary said in a one-para-

graph disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) welcomed reports that the two concessionaires were no longer seeking indemnification from the government.

"We [also] welcome reports that they will not implement the approved P2 per cubic meter water rate hike in January 2020," Bayan secretary gener-

al Renato M. Reyes Jr. said in a phone interview. Based on data from the MWSS Regulatory Office, Maynilad is supposed to raise its basic charge by P1.95 per cubic meter and Manila Water P2 per cubic meter effective Jan.1.

Bayan members on Monday filed in the MWSS a petition for the suspension of water rate increases. INQ



12-11-19

TITLE: PAGE 1/ DATE:

Manila Water, Maynilad drop claim

Both concessionaires put off rate hike for 3 months

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR

At risk of losing their concession deals, both Manila Water Company, Inc. and Maynilad Water Services, Inc. have realized that it's far more risky to be on the bad side of President Duterte than letting go of a few extra billions that the Philippine government supposedly owes them for winning their respective arbitration cases.

On Tuesday, both companies threw the white flag and said they will no longer ask for the billions of compensation the international court wants the Philippine government to pay them for the latter's refusal to implement their separate water rate hike applications a few years ago.

Pending water rate increase for the first quarter of 2020 will also be put on hold, top officials of Manila Water and Maynilad said.

Jose Almendras, Manila Water president and chief executive officer, said the Ayala-led company will no longer collect ₱7.39 billion from the government as a compensation for the losses it incurred from June 1, 2015 until November 22, 2019 for failing to increase water rates during this period.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in Singapore ruled last week that Manila Water has a right to indemnification ▶12

for actual losses suffered by it on account of the Philippine government's breach of its obligation.

The decision also required the Philippine government to pay 100 percent of the amounts paid by Manila Water to the PCA and 85 percent of Manila Water's other claimed costs.

However, less than a week since this was announced, Duterte said he will jail the executives of Manila Water and Maynilad for economic sabotage, which was followed by a series of rant fest against the two companies.

In the Philippine government's defense, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said that it's the unfair

provisions of concession agreements between water utilities and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) that caused the international court to decide in favor of Manila Water.

These include the provision that the government can't interfere in the setting of water rates as well as the provision on indemnity for possible losses in the event of such government interference.

It is also for this reason Maynilad won a ₱3.4-billion arbitration case against the government in 2018, Guevarra said.

As for Maynilad, its chairman, Manuel V. Pangilinan, already said in April of this year that his compa-

ny is "willing to drop" the arbitration case it had earlier filed against the Philippine government.

Ramoncito Fernandez, Maynilad president and chief executive officer, reiterated this on Tuesday.

"We agree with the President. We will no longer go after the award," Fernandez said.

Delayed water rate hike

To further appease Duterte, Maynilad and Manila Water will also no longer push for their quarterly water rate adjustment for the first three months of 2020.

"We will no longer implement the approved water rate increase scheduled to start in January 2020," Almendras said.

Maynilad will do the same, according to Fernandez.

This was days after MWSS Chief

Regulator Patrick Lester Ty said that the MWSS Board of Trustees has directed MWSS' Regulatory Office to initiate discussions with both companies to consider deferring their Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) applications.

"It would be an upward adjustment if approved," Ty earlier said.

Approved every quarter, FCDA is a tariff mechanism that allows Maynilad and Manila Water to recover or compensate for fluctuations in foreign exchange rates.

The two companies have to pay

foreign-dominated concession fees to MWSS, as well as dollar-denominated loans, which they used to fund their projects.

If companies are seeking for an upward FCDA, it means higher water rates for their customers for the next three months.

During the fourth quarter of this year, concessionaires both applied for an upward FCDA following the deferment of the implementation of the third quarter FCDA, which was decided upon as MWSS transitioned into a new leadership. (With a report from Ben Rosario)



Manila Water, Maynilad to defer rate hikes for January

By JOYEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ [@joyeemarie](#)

WATER concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad Water Services Inc. on Tuesday said they will defer their approved water rate hikes in January 2020 to a still unspecified time line, as their top officials endured grilling in the House of Representatives over provisions in their 1997 concession agreement with regulators that the Justice department deemed "onerous."

During the joint hearing of the House Committee on Good Government and House Committee on Public Accounts, Manila Water President and CEO Jose Almendras said they informed the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) on their intention to cooperate to reach an agreement regarding the implementation and delay in the water rate hikes.

Almendras said the water firm will also discuss the onerous provisions in the concession agreement.

"Our suggestion was to defer the rates hike and discuss with the regulatory office but, the increase in January 2020, will no longer be implemented," said Almendras.

"We will comply with the directive of President Rodrigo Duterte to review and discuss certain provisions in the concession agreement."

Almendras added.

For his part, Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito Fernandez said it is open to delay their scheduled water rate hike.

"We are open to delay [the water rate hike]. We agree with the delay, but we just have to discuss the timing and the provisions," Fernandez said.

The MWSS earlier approved a hike of P5.73 per cubic meter in the basic charge of Maynilad, and P6.22 to P6.50 per cubic meter for Manila Water, to be implemented in tranches.

As approved by the MWSS, starting January 1, 2020, Maynilad was set to increase its basic charge per cubic meter by P1.95; and Manila Water by P2.

At the joint hearing, Almendras also said the company will cooperate with the government and will not collect the P7.4-billion award recently made by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Singapore in the case filed by the water concessionaire for losses it incurred during previous administrations. *See story on page A1.*



lion award recently made by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Singapore in the case filed by the water concessionaire for losses it incurred during previous administrations. *See story on page A1.*

How much debt?—Atienza

ALSO at the House marathon hearing, Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza asked the two water concessionaires to submit a complete accounting of all that they have borrowed in the name of their concession contract from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other foreign lending institutions.

"These are all covered with the sovereign guarantee of the Filipino people. If they fail to pay for these loans, it's the Filipino people who will pay for them. How much have they borrowed? And how much have they put into construction of these treatment facilities?" asked Atienza, a former Environment secretary who, in August 2019, won a Supreme Court ruling upholding fines he imposed on the water concessionaires—this time for Manila Bay's pollution as a result of inadequate sewerage systems.

Atienza said at the House hearing: "They have been declaring net profits at the Philippine Stock Exchange every year, individual and corporate, and [even give out] dividends. We want a complete picture of this. This would prove that they are not losing money, but they want to make more money."

According to Atienza, public utilities such as water should never fall into the hands of private businesses.

"They will always be profit-motivated and not public service-oriented," Atienza added.

Renationalization

MEANWHILE, the Makabayan bloc said it is high time that the government take over water services instead of handing over control to another private company that also has inefficient service and costly rates for its consumers.

The bloc alluded to speculation that President Duterte stoked when he cited the water business of the Villars, who own PrimeWater Infrastructure Corp. In random comments, he said maybe they should take over Metro Manila's water supply system.

The Makabayan bloc has long called for the renationalization of water services.

"In just two decades, rates for Maynilad Water Services Inc. have increased by 596 percent, while Manila Water Co. by 970 percent. PrimeWater already controls 63 water districts with reports of hikes in the cost of water while also experiencing extreme water shortages," it added.



Duterte threatens takeover of water firms' operations

By BERNADETTE D. NICOLAS
@BNicolasBM

PRESIDENT Duterte has threatened anew to go as far as taking over the operations of water concessionaires aside from filing cases if he is not contented with the answers of water concessionaires on the alleged onerous deals.

The President's remark comes as the two private water concessionaires—Manila Water and Maynilad Water Services Inc.—announced at a hearing in Congress on Tuesday that they would no longer demand compensation amounting to a combined P10.8 billion from the government. The companies separately won awards from an arbitral tribunal in Singapore, where they sued the Philippine government over losses incurred from its refusal to approve tariff hikes in the past.

The cases involve past administrations, and Duterte said he would not pay the awards.

This development happened just a day after the President publicly said he wants to meet with officials from the water concessionaires, as well as the government lawyers who

were involved in crafting the deals.

*"Ayaw ninyong pumunta dito? Gusto ko magharap silang lahat dito sa akin. Isa-isahin ko sila, ang abugado ng p*t*ng*n* gumawa ng kontrata. Sino yung mga opisyal ng MWSS? Tanungin ko sila, what the f*ck did you do and screwed the country? [You don't want to come here? I want them all to face me. I will ask them one-by-one, including the lawyer who did the contract. Who are the officials of MWSS? I will ask them, what the f*ck did you do and screwed the country?],"* Duterte said on Tuesday in a speech during a mass oath taking in Malacañang, referring to water regulator Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

"Ngayon, pag hindi ako ma-satisfy, I will expropriate everything, kunin ko lahat. Magdemanda ka ng magdemanda. Tutal, dalawang taon lang naman wala na ako [Now, if I will not be satisfied, I will expropriate everything. File and file cases. After all, I have only two years left to serve]," he added. 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.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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A1
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

12-11-19

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

Maynilad, Mla Water waive P10.8-B awards



At the joint hearing of the House Committee on Good Government and House Committee on Public

THE Ayala-led Manila Water on Tuesday said it will no longer ask the government to pay the P7.39-billion arbitral award given recently by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Singapore. This, as the other concessionaire, Maynilad Water Services Inc., signaled it was also not pushing for payment of an earlier award by the same arbitral tribunal, for P3.4 billion covering losses arising from government's refusal to allow tariff hikes—or a total of P10.79 billion.

Accounts, Manila Water President and CEO Jose Almendras said the company will cooperate with the

government and will not collect the P7.39-billion award.

"We will comply with the wishes



"Although the President has said the government will not pay these arbitral awards... this gracious manifestation on the part of the water concessionaires nonetheless removes a potential liability from the books of account of the government."

—Guevarra

of the government and President Rodrigo Duterte," Almendras said.

"We abide with what President Duterte wants which is to review the concession agreement," he added.

CONTINUED ON A2



2/2

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Maynilad, Mla Water waive P11-B awards

CONTINUED FROM A1

The PCA in Singapore ruled that the Philippine government has to pay Manila Water P7.39 billion for the company's losses from June 1, 2015, to November 22, 2019, when it was not allowed to raise tariffs.

For his part, Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito Fernandez said Maynilad would also not ask the government to pay a similar P3.4-billion arbitral award given earlier by the same Singaporean court due to the Philippines's refusal to allow it to increase prices for 2013 to 2017.

"We will comply with the President's directive. [We will] not pursue the historic arbitral award," Fernandez said.

Earlier, President Duterte said he is keen on meeting 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 his threat that those behind the government contracts with the water concessionaires are liable for "economic plunder." Prior to this, Duterte accused them of committing economic sabotage.

The President has been lambasting the water concessionaires after the PCA in Singapore ordered Manila to pay east zone concessionaire Manila Water P7.39 billion for the nonimplementation 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.

'Gracious manifestation'

JUSTICE Secretary Menardo Guevarra said on Tuesday the decision of the water concessionaires to no longer pursue the separate arbitral awards from

Singapore's PCA would not affect the government's bid to remove the onerous provisions of their contracts with the government.

"I also received these feelers from Maynilad and Manila Water. This is a very positive development. Although the President has said that the government will not pay these arbitral awards, at least during his term anyway, this gracious manifestation on the part of the water concessionaires, nonetheless, removes a potential liability from the books of account of the government," Guevarra said.

"But as I said before, the issue of paying the arbitral award is not as important as ensuring that disputes arising from burdensome provisions of the water concession agreements will never happen again in the future," he added.

Asked if they would still continue reviewing the existing contracts with the two water firms and work toward removing the onerous provisions, Guevarra replied, "certainly."

'Centralized agency'

MEANWHILE, senators are poised to scrutinize proposals to put up a new "centralized agency" that will oversee delivery of water, sewerage and sanitation services.

The Senate Committee on Public Services, chaired by Sen. Grace Poe, scheduled a joint public hearing Wednesday with the Committees on Civil Service, Government Reorganization and Professional Regulation; Ways and Means; and Finance.

Senate probers are keen to know how the new agency intends to carry out the task to ensure improved delivery of vital water services to consumers, among others.

Poe confirmed an emerging consensus on the need to have "a lead agency whose ultimate responsibility would be the provision of adequate and safe water supply, not just for household and commercial needs, but for our farms."

Poe pointed out the disorganized setup prompted the need to frontload passage of remedial legislation that will effectively address the problems bugging the water service sector.

The senator, in a statement on Tuesday, noted that "what we currently have is a fragmented regulatory framework for water that has limited powers, which has a significant impact on the delivery of water and sanitation services in the country."

Senators sitting in the joint committee hearing will also review several related bills filed by Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto, Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon and Senators Ramon Revilla Jr. and Lito Lapid, all proposing to create a new water agency. These are related to the proposals filed by Senators Emmanuel Pacquiao, Francis Tolentino and Ronald de la Rosa battling for the creation of a Department of Water Resources Management.

At the same time, Poe indicated the hearing will also enable other proponents to "offer an opportunity to bring to the table questions about the government contracts with water concessionaires."

Moreover, the senator signaled that lawmakers could consider passing their own version of the water agency bill soon, even as enacting a water reform law is high on the list of President Duterte's priority measures. "We want assurance of the people's right to clean and steady supply of water," said Poe. *With Joel San Juan and Butch Fernandez*



Maynilad, Manila Water give up P10.8B claims

BY WENDELL VIGILIA
and JED MACAPAGAL

WATER concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Company Inc. (MWCI) yesterday said they will no longer pursue their P10.8-billion claims from the government.

"Yes. We will abide by what the government and the President (Duterte) want," former energy secretary Jose Rene Almendras, now Manila Water president and CEO, told the joint House hearing

of the committees on public accounts and on good government.

Almendras made the statement on the questioning of Anakalusugan party-list Rep. Michael Defensor, chair of the public accounts panel, who asked if MWCI was giving up its arbitral win.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in Singapore has ordered the Philippine government to pay MWCI P7.39 billion for the company's losses from June 1, 2015 to November 22, 2019.

Manila Water had gone to the

PCA after the government refused its demand to pay P79 billion from 2015 to 2017 for lost revenues after it was barred from raising tariffs.

The two House panels held the hearing after Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. filed a resolution following President Duterte's threat to scrap the concession agreements entered into by Manila Water and Maynilad with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) in favor of a new one which he said would "really (be) favorable to public, to government."

In a prepared statement that he read before the joint panel, Almendras announced that MWCI has decided to work with the government "to look for solutions to the arbitral award."

"We abide with what President Duterte wants which is to review the concession agreement," Almendras said, adding Manila Water is also deferring its plan to raise water rates next month.

Almendras said the MWCI and

See MAYNILAD > Page B5

MAYNILAD

The MWSS have already begun discussions on the provisions in the concession agreement that the President wants reviewed "and we want the negotiations expedited."

Maynilad CEO Ramoncito Fernandez said Maynilad has also decided to follow the President and give up its arbitral claim.

"We reiterate that we agree with what the President wants," Fernandez told congressmen.

"Our arbitral award was given in 2017 and after we followed it up to the government and were not given attention, we no longer pursued it. It is clear with the actions of Maynilad. Now that we are in this joint, we agree to the directive of the President to already let go of the historical arbitral awards," Fernandez said.

The PCA has previously ruled the Philippine government should pay Maynilad at least P3.4 billion in sovereign compensation for revenue losses it incurred from Jan. 1, 2013 to Feb. 28, 2015 alongside opportunity losses of at least P208 million added for every month of delay in payment for not allowing the water concessionaire to implement its rate hike allowed under the rate rebasing provisions of their concession.

Fernandez said Maynilad will also cooperate in the ongoing review of the concession agreement for the west concession that it won in 2007.

Fernandez said it is also prepared to defer its plan for rate increase, depending on what will be agreed upon with the government. He warned, though, that the rate increase deferment will have implications on service sustainability and on the provisions of the Clean Water Act.

"So you agree to the deferment or as long as you get a fair return of what you've invested?" Defensor asked Fernandez who said, "Yes."

In total, the current five-year rate rebasing period that will end by 2022 has allowed Maynilad to increase its basic charge by P5.73

per cubic meter and Manila Water by P6.22 to P6.50 per cubic meter.

Maynilad's basic charge per cubic meter is supposed to increase next month by P1.95, and Manila Water by P2 per cubic meter.

Under the concession agreement signed by the MWSS alongside Maynilad and Manila Water, rate rebasing shall be conducted every five years. With the said process, water rates will be adjusted depending on the performance, expenses, earnings, unrecovered investments and service improvement plans of the water concessionaires.

President Duterte has repeatedly complained about the "onerous" and "disadvantageous" provisions in the concession deals of the utility firms with the government, which he said were unfavorable to the government and the country.

Among the questionable provisions were the prohibition against government's interference in rate-setting and the provision on indemnity for possible losses in the event of such government interference.

The twin provisions were cited by Maynilad and Manila Water when they hauled the Philippine government before the PCA, and these were likewise the basis used by the arbitral court in awarding damages to the utility firms.

NO STOPPING REVIEW OF WATER DEALS

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra welcomed the announcements of Manila Water and Maynilad, but said the review of their existing water concession agreement will push through to remove the onerous provisions.

"This is a very positive development, although the President has said that the government will not pay these arbitral awards, at least during his term anyway, this gracious manifestation on the part of the water concessionaires nonetheless removes a potential liability from the books of account of the government," Guevarra said.

But the DOJ chief said the government is not really concerned about paying the two water firms but about removing the "burdensome" provisions in their concession agreements.

"As I have said before, the issue of paying the arbitral award is not as important as ensuring that disputes arising from burdensome provisions of the water concession agreements will never happen again in the future," he said.

Pressed as to whether the government will pursue the review of the agreement to remove what he said are the "burdensome and onerous" provisions, Guevarra said it will definitely continue.

"Certainly, it (review) will continue," Guevarra said.

On Monday, Guevarra said a composite team of lawyers from the Department of Justice, the Office of the Solicitor General, the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel and the Department of Finance has been formed to review the contracts.

GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER

President Duterte threatened to take over the operations of the private water concessionaires if government lawyers and other individuals involved in the drafting of the agreements fail to satisfactorily explain the inclusion of the questionable provisions.

The President, at the oath taking of the newly appointed and promoted members of the Bureau of Fire Protection, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and the Philippine Coast Guard, reiterated that he wants to meet and talk with the parties who were privy to the drafting and approval of the concession deals.

Duterte even threatened to suspend the writ of habeas corpus and drag the lawyers and other individuals involved in the preparation of the deals to force them to meet with him.

The President said he wants to ask the lawyers: "What the fuck did you do and screwed the country?"

"I want everybody, mga abugado

noon, kung ayaw ninyo pumunta dito, I will drag them, if you will force my hand, then I will throw my last card. I will suspend [the writ of] habeas corpus at hihilahin ko kayo with economic sabotage. Ngayon, kapag hindi ako ma-satisfy, I will appropriate everything, kunin ko lahat (I want everybody, even the lawyers then. If they don't want to come here, I will drag them. If you will force my hand, then I will throw my last card. I will suspend [the writ of] habeas corpus and will pull you with economic sabotage. Now, if I am not satisfied, I will appropriate everything, I will take everything)," he said.

The President, at the height of the water supply problem during the summer periods, ordered a review of the water contracts, warning that he is ready to rescind them and for government to take over operations.

CONCESSION CONSPIRACY

Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo, concurrent presidential spokesman, said former presidents Fidel Ramos and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo may be held accountable if proven that they were involved in the crafting of the "onerous" contracts.

"If they are part of the conspiracy (they can be charged). If they are not, they cannot," Panelo said.

To resolve the issue, Panelo said government push for the removal of the onerous provisions in the agreements, appeal the arbitration award given by the Singapore court before the Supreme Court of Singapore, "or if they will enforce it in the Philippines by filing a petition in our lower courts, then we will oppose it".

Duterte has ordered the Solicitor General and Finance Secretary to craft a new contract that is more acceptable to the government.

He also vowed to pursue "economic sabotage" and economic plunder charges against the water concessionaires, as well as those who were involved in the crafting of the deals. — *With Ashgel Hachero and Jocelyn Montemayor*



Widespread devastation

A week after Typhoon "Tisoy" (international name: Kammuri), the strongest typhoon to hit the country this year, barreled through central Philippines and enhanced the northeast monsoon, thousands of Filipinos in sodden Cagayan are still desperately crying out for immediate aid and assistance.

Their cries, however, have been unfortunately drowned out by the (well-deserved) attention and cheers the country has been lavishing on the competing Filipino athletes in the 30th Southeast Asian Games, as well as the seeming indifference of some of the highest national government officials to the sorry plight of the province now under a state of calamity.

"The Cagayan River is no more," lamented Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba during Monday's flag-raising ceremony in the provincial capitol. "It has become an ocean."

Torrential and incessant rains over three weeks caused the Cagayan River to breach the critical level of 12 meters above sea level, submerging entire villages and causing some 70,000 residents to flee to cramped temporary shelters. They are in dire need of basic necessities such as food, water, blankets and clothes.

Key roads have also remained impassable to all types of vehicles, as the heavy downpour last week triggered landslides that locked down Cagayan's capital city of Tuguegarao. The full effect on agriculture is yet to be quantified, but already the local government sees that, on top of calamity funds, it will need "a lot of help" from the national government.

Cagayan's lingering woes are sadly duplicated in regions in the path of Tisoy, the 20th typhoon to hit the country this year, and the full impact of which is just starting to be tallied. The Dec. 10 report by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council showed that 428,659 families, or 1.83 million Filipinos, were affected by Tisoy in 3,257 barangays in Central Luzon, the Bicol Region, Eastern Visayas, the Cordillera and Caraga administrative regions. Some 19,843 families are currently taking temporary shelter in 335 evacuation centers.

Almost 200 areas were flooded in Central Luzon, Calabarzon, the Bicol Region, Central Visayas and Eastern Visayas, although floodwaters in 187 areas have already subsided. Some 22 road sections and three bridges in the affected regions are still not passable. Declared under a state of calamity are the provinces of Oriental and Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Quezon, Cavite and Northern Samar, and parts of Romblon, Batangas and Laguna.

The National Grid Corp. of the Philippines reported that while power has been restored in most provinces affected by the typhoon, it remains unstable and areas will remain prone to outages, raising the possibility that many communities will spend the Christmas holidays without power.

And while the local governments and other disaster agencies are to be lauded for their preparations that have kept the casualty count to the barest (if still heartbreaking) minimum, the postdisaster work is just beginning.

Mamba has urged immediate action to arrest further "environmental destruction" in Cagayan and in other parts of the region. It's rainwater from the nearby provinces of Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Kalinga, Apayao and Ifugao that flow into the Cagayan River, but if the forests in those areas continue to be denuded, the river will overflow more frequently and put residents and infrastructure around it at great risk. "We have seen it worsen every year," said Mamba, who is calling for a "united front" to battle the adverse effects of climate change and environmental abuse that he claims involves "politicians, generals and regional directors."

The Philippines is more vulnerable to climate change than other countries; a recent study by environmental policy think tank Germanwatch ranked us as the second most affected country by climate-related disasters in 2018. Also, according to its Global Climate Risk Index report released last week, the Philippines was fourth overall in terms of the most number of recorded deaths due to extreme weather events last year, leaping from 11th place in 2017.

For Greenpeace Southeast Asia, the Philippines is already in a state of "climate emergency," and "We call on the Philippine government to formally acknowledge this emergency situation and act with utmost urgency and defend the interests of its people in the face of climate injustice."

Mamba, among the increasing number of local public officials who are grappling with the consequences of environmental devastation in their communities, is voicing the same plea. "We have a big problem, and if we do not solve this, it will only become more severe," he warns.

Is Malacañang listening?



EDITORIAL

MABILIS NA BUMAHA SA CAGAYAN VALLEY, BAKIT?

AYON sa mga ordinaryong mamamayan sa Cagayan Valley, nagtataka sila kung bakit napakabilis na ngayon ang pagtaas ng tubig-baha mula sa mga ilog, laio na sa Cagayan River at Chico River na bumabagsak sa Cagayan River.

Isa pang kapuna-puna ang grabeng pagbaha sa Western Cagayan na hindi nagaganap sa mga nagdaang panahon.

Hindi magandang balita ito para sa Cagayan Valley dahil labis na mapanira ito sa nakararami.

Agrikultura o pagpapalay, pagmamais, paggugulay ang pangunahing hanapbuhay ng higit na nakararami sa rehiyon.

Subalit sa nagaganap ngayong pagbaha, nagbabadya ang nakatatakot sa darating na bukas o mga buwan at taon dahil sinasabi ng mga mamamayan na maaaring lalala pa sa mga darating na panahon ang mga mabilis, malawak at matagalang pagbaha.

Nakatatakot umano nilang isipin na lagi silang mawawasakan o masisiraan ng kanilang mga pinagpapaguran at magiging kakambal na lagi ito ng gutom at paghihirap.

Isipin pang maging ang kanilang mga pananahanan ay nasisira na rin na hindi nila naranasan sa nagdaang mga panahon.

Dapat na magsuri nang husto ang mga opisyal ng pamahalaan, alamin ang mga puno't dulo ng mga mapaminsalang baha at gumawa ng mga paraan na hindi masisira ang buhay at ari-arian ng mga mamamayan.

Bukod, halimbawa, sa pagpapakawalan ng tubig ng Pantabangan Dam, kakaibang pag-ulan at kalbong mga kabundukan, ano-ano pa ang mga nagaganap na sanhi ng mga mapaminsalang baha?

Tiyak na hindi makukuha sa dasal ang problema sa baha kundi sa tamang aksyon ng mga kinauukulan at mamamayan.



12-11-19

DATE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DAAN-DAANG PUNONG-KAHOY NAKUHA SA BAHANG SA CAGAYAN

MAGSASAGAWA ang Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO)-Cagayan ng malawakang inventory sa driftwood na nagkalat sa mga barangay partikular sa mga ilog na tinangay matapos na bumaha dulot ng malakas na pag-ulan.

Kaya nananawagan ang PENRO-Cagayan sa publiko lalo na sa mga barangay official na pansamantalang huwag munang ilabas o kaya galawin sa kanilang mga nasasakupang lugar ang mga na-

kuhang salvaged wood o mga punong-kahoy na siyang naging sanhi ng malawakang pagbaha sa kanilang lugar.

Pahayag ni Atty. Ismael Manaligod, PENRO Officer sa Cagayan, inatasan niya ang kanilang mga kawani ng nasabing ahensiya na magsagawa ng inventory upang malaman kung may katotohanan na nakarating sa kanilang tanggapan na umano'y may mga ilegal na namumutol ng mga punong kahoy sa bulubundukin na siyang naging sanhi ng pagbaha

sa Cagayan.

Samantala, naghigpit na ang pamunuan ng PENRO-Cagayan sa mga nagnanais na bumili ng chainsaw, na hindi lahat ay mabibigyan ng permit.

Ipinaliwanag naman ni Manaligod na hindi lahat ng mga gustong bumili ng chainsaw ay nabibigyan ng permit, kailangan ay may registered plantation o may mga itinanim na punong kahoy sa mga pribadong lupain bago mabigyan ng kaukulang permit ang kanilang chainsaw.

IRENE GONZALES



Occ. Mindoro bans coal use for energy

THE provincial board of Occidental Mindoro has adopted an ordinance that effectively prohibits the use of coal as a source of energy.

The ordinance, entitled "Regulating The Use of Fossil Fuels And Banning The Use of Coal Fired Energy Source Of Power Stations Thereby Replacing Or Using Alternative Green Energy As Part Of Global Efforts To Contribute To The Goals of Climate Change," or otherwise known as the "Green Energy Ordinance" was approved on Dec. 5 by the city council led by Vice Governor and Presiding Officer Peter Alfaro.

It was authored by Abelardo S. Pangilinan, chairman of the Committee on Education, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

SBB "Occ. MINDORO," A2

Occ. Mindoro. . . CONTINUED FROM A1

Basically, it covers the usage regulation of all fossil fuels and bans the installation of any coal power plant in the province of Occidental Mindoro.

The province has now opted to pursue renewable-energy (RE) projects and promote renewable-energy programs. "It is the prime obligation of the provincial government of Occidental Mindoro together with all department heads; the Occidental Mindoro Electric Cooperative is tasked to pursue the policy toward renewable energy," it said.

The province also approved the creation of a council in charge of crafting measures encouraging the use of RE in the province.

The province is determined to ensure future energy security by improving thermal efficiency in power generation, increasing contributions from RE, and shifting toward more energy-efficient vehicles.

The council, to be led by the governor, will include representatives from the business and industrial sectors, as well as those from various government agencies.

Since the provinces of Mindoro have the largest biodiversity in the

country and in the world, the provincial government said it is "bound to protect and put the public welfare on top of our priorities without sacrificing and taking away the resources of future generations."

"We may not be [on a] par with the developed or advance countries, but with our developmental status, it is to our advantage to take great lessons that the negative impacts of pollution and effluent emissions can do irreversible damage.

"Fossil fuels come with a cost. Coal smoke is linked to everything—from asthma and birth defects, to cancer and premature death. Natural-gas fracking is tied to contaminated groundwater and earthquakes, while oil is the single-largest source of air pollution and smog in the world," it said.

With the decision to make its province coal-free, Occidental Mindoro strives to preserve its own local natural resources, and nurture a healthy well-being for its citizens. "Understanding the scope of coal-fired effluent impacts is critical for informing our choices around energy production—and for preventing the worst impacts of climate change," it added. *Lenie Lectura*



GREEN ENERGY ISINUSULONG SA OCC MINDORO

ISINUSULONG ngayon sa pamahalaang lalawigan ng Occidental Mindoro ang pag-regulate sa paggamit ng fossil fuels at pagbabawal sa paggamit ng coal fired energy source ng power stations, at papalitan na lamang ng alternatibong green energy bilang pakikiisa sa global efforts para labanan ang masamang epekto ng Climate change.

Sa isang ordinansa, na mas kilala bilang 'Green Energy Ordinance,' na iniakda ni Kon. Abelardo Pangilinan, chairperson ng Committee on Education, Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology, sinabi nito na kailangang maprotektahan at unahin ang kapakanan ng publiko nang hindi nasakripisyo ang resources para sa mga susunod na henerasyon.

"Let us not forget that the Provinces of Mindoro has the largest biodiversity in the country and in the world. As the voice of the people, we are morally and dutifully bound to protect and put the public welfare on top of our priorities without sacrificing and taking away the resources of future generations," aniya.

"We may not be at par with the developed or advance countries,

but with our developmental status, it is to our advantage to take great lessons that the negative impacts of pollution and effluent emissions can do irreversible damages. Do we need to choose between CLEAN AIR and GROWTH and suffer in the near future? or we have an option where we can balance the utilization of resources?" aniya pa.

Tinukoy pa niya sa panukala ang inilathala ng The Environmental Magazine noong October 18, 2019, na sa mga pangunahing electricity generation sources, ang coal ang largest emitter; at noong 2018, ito ang responsable sa 30% ng lahat ng energy related CO2 emissions.

"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," anito pa.

Nanindigan pa siya na kinakailangan ang istriktong regulasyon na nagre-require sa mga coal-fired power plants na i-manage ang kanilang disposal at treatment ng mga coal ash at iba pang toxic waste upang hindi makontamina ang tubig.

"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 renewable sources of energy," aniya pa.

"The regulatory impact analysis for the effluent guidelines assumes that more than a dozen power plants would go above-and-beyond. Fossil fuels come with a cost. Coal smoke is linked with everything from asthma and birth defects to cancer and premature death. Natural gas fracking is tied to contaminated groundwater and earthquakes while oil is the single largest source of air pollution and smog in the world," saad pa nito.

Nabatid na sakop ng ordinansa ang usage regulation ng lahat ng fossil fuels at pagba-ban sa installation ng anumang coal power plant sa lalawigan ng Occidental Mindoro.

Nakasaad din dito paglikha ng provincial renewable energy council na bubuo ng mga batas na hihikayat sa mga renewable energy programs para sa pagkakaroon ng isang 'greener

at energy-sufficient province."

"The Council shall be Chaired by the Governor. The Members are representatives from DENR, PG-ENRO, Municipal Mayors, DILG, PIEP Occidental Mindoro Chapter, OMECO; SUCs, OM Chamber of Commerce; Business Sector, Water Sector, Fishermen Sector, Agriculture Sector, Industrial Sector, Health Sector, Professional Organizations, Power/Energy Providers," anang ordinansa.

Nabatid na sinisiguro rin naman sa ordinansa ang isang alternatibong landas para matiyak ang energy security ng lalawigan sa hinaharap sa pamamagitan nang pagpapahusay sa thermal efficiency sa power generation, pagdaragdag ng kontribusyon mula sa renewable energy, at pag-shift sa mga mas energy-efficient vehicles gaya ng hydro, solar, wind, gas, biomass, bio-fuel, geothermal.

"Use of ENERGY MIX may be considered," anito pa.

Nabatid na anim na lalawigan na rin sa Filipinas ang nag-ban na ng coal-powered energy projects; kabilang dito ang Guimaras, Masbate, Ilocos Norte, Negros Oriental, Bohol, at Sorsogon.

**ANA ROSARIO
HERNANDEZ**



Environment group lauds results of probe into fossil fuel violations

ENVIRONMENTAL group Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED) yesterday lauded the results of the 3-year investigation of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHR) into the accountability of the 47 biggest fossil fuel firms in the world for climate related human rights violations against Filipinos, which were publicly announced at a COP25 side event in Madrid.

Represented by CHR commissioner Roberto Cadiz, the CHR explained that the investigation, which it took on in 2016 upon the petition of more than a dozen civil society groups and affected communities, affirmed the reality of today's climate emergency and its largely anthropogenic nature, and found that 'carbon majors'

or largely polluting companies can be held liable for their contributions to climate change.

"The CHR's statement is welcome news, especially as we observe the International Human Rights Day. For the longest time, these Carbon Majors have been recklessly emitting pollutants with no regard for the social impacts of their actions. The investigation's trailblazing findings serve

as a splash of cold water to these dirty fuel giants' faces. No longer can they feign ignorance or shut their eyes from the reality of climate vulnerability that communities from the Philippines and across the globe have been forced to endure," said Gerry Arances, executive director of CEED.

"The CHR's landmark conclusion is a glimmer of hope to climate vulnerable and fossil fuel affected

communities, because it basically said that ensuring people struggling to defend their rights to life and well-being are able to do so is an obligation of carbon majors. Failure to protect human rights would place them in violation of moral and, in as of yet particular circumstances, legal violations."

The commission clarified that while the report does not bear sanctions for

the 47 companies, it showed that there is room for the Philippines to already take action with existing laws. It also paves a path for jurisdictions across the globe to establish legal accountability by strengthening and creating legislation.

"We are in hopes that the CHR findings would initiate a domino effect in the climate justice conversation," said Arances.

Jun I. Legaspi



A nation in crisis?

Recently I wrote about a water crisis facing Metro Manila. This is on top of the traffic crisis that we have been enduring for more than three years with no visible relief in sight.

Then last week the DILG secretary declares that Metro Manila is facing a garbage crisis. We are, literally, swimming in trash from the heavily polluted Manila Bay. At almost the same time, we read about the results of the 2018 Global Climate Risk Index which places the Philippines as the second most vulnerable country when it comes to adverse climate conditions, second only to Japan. This is in all respects a climate crisis.

Another troubling story, although education officials say they had expected it, was the release by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of the results of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is a world-wide student assessment conducted every three years to measure the ability of 15-year-old students "to use their reading, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges." Among 79 participating countries, the Philippines ranked last in reading. We ranked second to last in science and mathematics. For most observers, this shows that our educational system, public education to be specific, is in crisis.

As expected, these "crisis" reports elicited the customary knee-jerk responses from several government officials. Business establishments in the Manila Bay area, as well as local government units, were warned of punitive actions. In the case of the PISA results, there were calls for the scrapping of the K-12 program. On EDSA's traffic, we were told to grin and bear it.

I know that I am repeating myself, but let me state the obvious: the host of problems that have now reached crisis proportions, particularly in Metro Manila, did not emerge overnight. Most of these problems have been identified as far back as the 1990s. Plans were, in fact, drawn up. Had these plans been implemented early on and with a sense of urgency and considerable competence, we might not be talking about these things today.

Our authorities have tended to view emerging problems as minor irritants. There is no long view. And when the

minor problem becomes a full-blown crisis, they frantically search for palliative solutions. And instead of owning up, they use the "peanut butter defense." They spread the blame.

Blame is often ascribed to previous administrations, which may not sound credible if the one tossing the blame has been in power for more than three years. Blame-tossing does not solve anything. It breeds animosity and discord when the goal should be to invite allies and partners in addressing the problem.

Of course, the issue of competence – or the lack of it – is also a factor, a by-product of the practice of appointing political allies to key government positions. In most cases, political appointees see their tenures as short-term engagements in exchange for previous political favors. Unless the appointee is a proven management expert, knows the sector, or is willing to take risks for the public interest, most political appointees tend to sit on their hands while chaos reigns in their area of concern. The logical approach is to retain senior officials of the previous administration who have proven their competence. But this does not square with our political culture.

As I have said countless times, government has a predisposition for rushed responses. This way of working needs to change. Governance should not be on a day-to-day, piecemeal basis. Citizens need to see and feel their government working for them and addressing their needs, not only during times of crisis.

Likewise, every change in administration is usually followed by new plans and programs – discarding even the good programs of the predecessors. This also needs to stop if we want to ensure the country's long-term economic viability, inclusiveness, and social equity.

A succession of governments seem to be testing the Filipinos' capacity for patience. But will it have to take a full-blown crisis of confidence in government before the authorities wake up?



GOVERNANCE MATTERS

JEJOMAR C. BINAY
FORMER VICE PRESIDENT



You reap what you sow

“Reaping what you sow,” a quote attributed to the Christian apostle Paul, is about action and consequences. It strikes at the core of the message of Secretary Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) when he addressed top government officials and leaders of industry who came together in a forum organized by The Stratbase Group to share in the global crusade to sustain the environment and help save the future of mankind.

The story embarks upon the handling of a man-made problem: waste. “We are in the middle of a garbage crisis,” said Mr. Cimatu. Statistics from the Ocean Conservancy indicate that the Philippines is ranked third after China and Indonesia in terms of contributing to ocean litter. According to Mr. Cimatu, the Philippines generates some 7 million metric tons of plastic waste annually, while about half a million metric tons becomes marine debris. He added that the waste generation baseline for 2019 of 58,000 cubic meters has already been surpassed. The disturbing part is that much of this will eventually be found in the sea. A considerable amount of this garbage is plastic waste that will find its way into the food chain for the fish that, in turn, people will consume.

Plastic as a global industry began in 1907 following the invention in the US of the first synthetic plastic called Bakelite. The name “plastic” itself came from the Greek word *plastikos*, which means “capable of being shaped or molded.” With the expansion of mass production technologies and the spread of a “throw-away” culture, plastic has become a short-cut to business growth. The Philippine economy itself has evolved somewhat into a “sachet” economy. Globally, practically all tools and gadgets contain plastic components. But plastic has also taken its toll on the environment and public health.

Against this backdrop, the DENR has taken the lead in working with the Philippine Senate and the House of Representatives to address the problem. One of the specific concrete responses being studied is that of Extended Producer Responsibility, or EPR.

EPR is a practice where a manufacturer takes back the product it produced after the item itself has outgrown its usefulness. The scheme revolves around the “Polluter Pays Principle,” which requires that the responsibility of the producer be extended up until the post-consumer stage of a product’s life cycle. In other words, the manufacturer assumes the burden of disposal and recycling.



EPR is widely practiced in Europe because laws, regulations, and systems are in place. In Asia, Japan is heavily involved in it as well. However, the rest of Asia has a lot to work on.

While the Philippines does not officially have an EPR system in place yet, some companies have been practicing it in some form since the 1970s. Among these are companies that produce car batteries. When a buyer makes a purchase of a car battery, the seller offers a trade-in incentive by way of a rebate.

However, with the rise of online retail sales today, the practice of EPR has met with some complications. With the bulk of unbranded retail products traded online and produced overseas, it becomes difficult to require local manufacturers to undertake EPR knowing that others can get away as freeloaders.

The call of Senator Cynthia Villar to involve the private sector and other stakeholders in this initiative drives home the importance of shifting from a linear model to a circular one to keep resources in circulation for as long as possible, get the maximum value, and generate outputs from it. This means that instead of just banning the use of plastics, it would make better sense if the government involved the participation of citizens and industries while encouraging the establishment of more plastic recycling plants under the basic formula of “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.”

Fortunately, more people and businesses are actively taking the lead as environment champions. Among these are Coca-Cola Philippines with its “World Without Waste” program; Unilever Philippines with its “Zero Waste to Nature” program, “All Things Hair Refillery” refilling and recycling hubs, and “Misis Walastik” post-consumer sachet waste pro-

gram; and Maynilad’s tree planting programs, recovery of 700 million liters of water through the rehabilitation of water pipes, and the conversion of plastic waste into school chairs for use in public schools, done in partnership with the Villar Sipag Foundation.

Even the city of Manila has an incentivized collection program for flexible plastic waste under the “*May Pera sa Basura*” initiative of Mayor Francisco “Isko” Moreno Domagoso. In addition, through Unilever’s Office and Factory Solid Waste Management Program, waste generated from their factories and offices are either eliminated at the source or recycled off-site by DENR-accredited waste haulers.

Hopefully, more private sector participants will be able to join as industry champions. However, it is important to emphasize that no single player should be solely responsible for addressing this issue. Everyone is culpable in this matter. If people continue to wantonly dispose of their waste and disregard the law, then it will just be a hopeless, vicious cycle.

It is high time for everyone — may they be from the government, the private sector, the academe, or civil society — to pro-actively collaborate and take responsibility in managing our waste. No single player possesses all the relevant resources, knowledge, skills, connections, and other valuable assets, hence the need to help each other out for the greater good.

It would benefit us all if everyone does his or her share in this crusade towards environment sustainability. After all, the future we save may just be our own. ■

VENICE ISABELLE RAÑOSA is a Research Manager at Stratbase ADR Institute.

**THINKING
BEYOND
POLITICS**
VENICE ISABELLE
RAÑOSA



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



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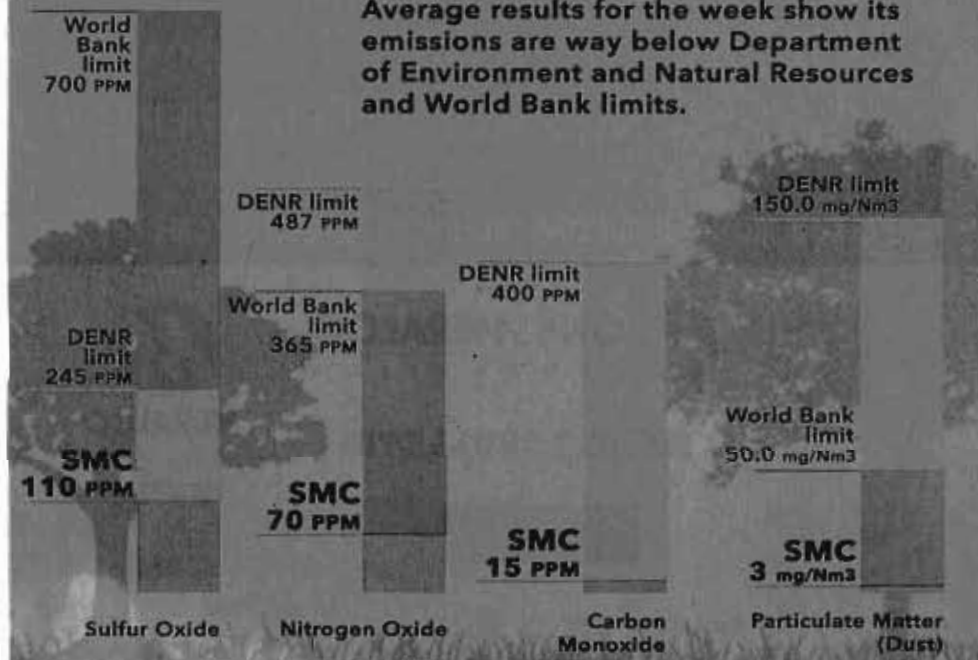


SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

WEEKLY ENVIRONMENT WATCH

December 2-8, 2019

San Miguel Corporation's Limay CFB (Circulating Fluidized Bed) power plant undergoes daily emission testing. Average results for the week show its emissions are way below Department of Environment and Natural Resources and World Bank limits.





TITLE:

NATAPOS na rin sa wakas ang South East Asian Games nang mapayapa, maayos, masaya at marangal gaya ng ipinangako ng mga organisador ng Philippine Sports Commission sa ilalim ni William 'Butch' Ramirez at Philippine South East Asian Games Committee sa ilalim naman ni Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano.

Sa pangkalahatan, ipinagmamalaki natin na naging matagumpay ang palaro sa pagitan ng 11 bansang kasali.

Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Timor Leste, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Brunei Darussalam at Pilipinas.

Walang naranasang terorismo ang mga dayuhang atleta, turista, opisyal ng gobyerno nila sa halos dalawang linggong paligsahan.

Wala ring nadisgrasya sa pagdating ng bagyong Tisoy sa mga dayuhan.

Gayundin ang kalagayan sa pangkalahatan ng lahat ng mga atletang Pinoy, mamamayang Pinoy at government officials ng pamahalaang Pilipinas.

Nagkaroon man tayo ng mga malungkot na balita sa bagyo gaya ng 13 namatay sa bagyong Tisoy, agad namang nasikaso ang mga ito ng mga kinauukulan, mga kabarangay at iba pa.

Nagkaroon man ng ilang mga problema sa preparasyon, napawi naman ang mga ito sa kalaunan.

IBA PANG GOOD NEWS

Ang iba pang magandang balita, walang naging dayaan sa palaro gaya ng paglason sa mga atleta, pandaraya ng mga huwes sa mga palaro, pagnakaw sa mga gamit ng mga ito, pambibiktima ng mga kriminal at iba pa.

Naririyang din ang mga malalaking pabuya para sa mga nanalong atleta mula sa P10 milyong sahod ng mga kongresman.

Iba pa ang mga sinadyang malalaking premyo mula mismo sa pamahalaan.

Naririyang din ang inasahang pabuya mismo ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

At dahil sa pagkakaroon natin ng mga world class na pasilidad, inasahang magiging maganda ang mga ito na training center ng manlalaro natin sa darating pang mga panahon SEAG at maging sa mas mapanghamon na Asian Games at iba pang international na



ULTIMATUM

NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

SALUDO SA LAHAT SA SEA GAMES

sports.

Inaasahan ding darating ang higit pang mga turista upang pasyalan ang mga pinagdausan ng ating mga palaro gaya ng Philippine Arena sa Bocaue, Bulacan na pinakamalaking coliseum sa buong mundo na itinayo mismo ng Iglesia ni Cristo sa ilalim ni Ka Eduardo Manalo.

Naririyang din ang Clark City sa parte ng Tarlac na pinagtayuan ng Cauldron at sports complex na may athletes village at pinakamodernong sentro sa Asya para sa mga atleta.

HINDI LANG HOSPITABLE

Naipakita rin ng mga Pinoy athlete mismo na hindi lang hospitable ang mga Pinoy gaya ng ginawa ni Roger Casugay sa larong surfing.

Nang lamunin ng mga alon ang Indonesian na si Arip Nurhidayat makararang maputol ang tali ng paa nito sa surfing board, iniligtas siya sa kapahamakan ni Casugay.

Sa isipan ni Casugay, hindi bale nang walang gintong mapanalunan kaysa mamatayan naman ng isang kapatid sa paligsahan.

Ang hospitality ng mga Pinoy ay hindi lang nakikita sa kanilang walang pagkukunwaring ngiti sa mga dayuhan at kapwa kundi sa pagpapakita ng malasakit at pagliligtas sa oras ng sakuna at pangangailangan.

Kaya nga, saludo ang Ultimatum sa iyo, kapatid na Roger Casugay.

Dapat bigyan ng karapatang parangal ng mga kinauukulan si Casugay na isang Samaritanong atleta at sana'y tularan siya ng iba.

TALAGANG MABUNGA

Dahil sa pagpapakita ng pamahalaan ng pagkaseryoso at pagmamahal sa palaro, pag-aalaga sa mga atletang Pinoy at magandang pakikitungo sa mga atletang dayuhan at iba pa, naririyang din ang hamon sa Pilipinas na idaos ang Asian Games sa 2030.

Pero alam ba ninyo ang isa pang nakitang mahalaga ng Olympic Council of Asia na gumawa ng hamon?

Ang masidhing partisipasyon ng mga mamamayang Filipino sa

sports.

Hindi inakala ng mga dayuhan na dudumugin ng mga mamamayan ang lahat ng palaro na idinaos sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa.

May trapik? May bagyo? May iniisyu na korapsyon? May hindi magandang pagkain?

Ah, hindi inintindi ng mga Pinoy ang mga ito at higit nilang inintindi ang mga positibong bagay na naging matagumpay naman.

Higit na mahalaga ngayon ang pagkampeon ng Pilipinas sa SEAG kaysa magpatali sa mga hindi magagandang bagay.

PARANG GIYERA RIN SA DROGA

Lumalabas na parang kwentong kaugnay ng giyera sa droga ang naganap sa SEAG.

Habang panay ang paninira ng iba sa giyera at pinagmumukhang demonyo ang mga nasa pamahalaan, lalong kumapit ang mga mamamayan sa pamahalaan Duterte laban sa droga.

Sa rami ng mga idinaos na pagkilos ng mga kritiko, kasama na ang pagdedemanda sa mga dayuhang korte laban sa mga opisyal ng pamahalaan sa giyera sa droga, nanatiling pabor ang higit na nakararaming Pinoy sa giyera sa droga.

Ganito rin ang nangyari sa SEAG.

Hindi inintindi ng mga Pinoy ang mga bashing at pagbabanta ng mga imbestigasyon sa mga umano'y korapsyon.

Itinuon ng mga mamamayan ang suporta nila sa mga atletang Pinoy kaya naman, heto ang nakatataba sa puso na resulta.

Panalo ang mga atletang Pinoy sa pangkalahatan, maging sa paghahakot ng mga medalyang ginto, pilak at bronze. Tiyak na nakalikha ang SEAG ng drive sa mga mamamayan na magpahalaga sa sports para sa kanilang sarili at para sa buong bayan.

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