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IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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CARTOON

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Manila Bay swimmable in 7 years

Maybe, just maybe – Antiporda

By Kuhlín Ceslie Gacula

Picture yourself swimming in Manila Bay minus the stink and with the water palpably cleaner. Now, reset your timetable for that to – hold your breath – seven years from now.

“Within six months to one year, we will feel a drastic change here (Manila Bay) in our water quality,” Undersecretary Benny Antiporda of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said yesterday. Antiporda warned though

that it may still take up to seven years Manila Bay’s waters to be swimmable.

Still, swimming and other water sports activities being allowed in Manila Bay would actually depend on the results of water tests. The magic number is 100 mpn (most probable number) coliform bacteria per 100 milliliter (ml) or below.

Before the clean-up started on 27 January, the coliform levels at the bay ranged from 330 mpn/100ml to 1.3 billion mpn/100ml.

Tons and truckloads of trash have already been collected from the bay and the areas around it.

Fecal coliform level dropping from as high as 1.3 billion bacteria per 100ml but the magic number for water sports is only 100mpn/100ml or below.

Recent reports from DENR stated that the fecal coliform content of water samples from the areas around Manila Bay has been consistently dropping.

The fecal coliform content in the Ermita area has gone down to 7.9 million mpn from the previous 330 million mpn.

Fecal content in the Remedios area, likewise, decreased to 65 million mpn from 160 mpn, while that at the Manila Yacht Club was at 52 million mpn, down from 1.3 billion mpn.

“The rehabilitation of the whole Manila Bay and its tributaries meanwhile may take up to 20 years,” Antiporda said.

“This will require not just the removal of trash but a crackdown on fish pens, dumpsites and ships that contribute to the bay’s pollution,” he added.

A six-month rehabilitation program had brought down the coliform level in the waters of Boracay Island in Aklan from 900 mpn/100ml to as low as 8 mpn/100ml.



Long, long wait It may take seven years of cleaning up before Manila Bay becomes safe for swimming.

YUMMIE DINGDING



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Gov't processing 22 bay reclamation projects

3 pending applications nearing approval, PRA official tells solons

By DJ Yap
@deejayapINQ

A total of 22 reclamation projects are planned along Manila Bay that will affect—and likely pollute—a 22,000-hectare area of the body of water, an official of the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) admitted to lawmakers on Monday.

At a hearing of the House Metro Manila development committee, Joseph Literal, PRA assistant general manager for reclamation and regulation, said the agency was currently processing 22 applications from developers.

11-percent coverage

Once approved, the projects would cover 22,000 ha or about 11 percent of the bay's 1,994-square-kilometer area.

Due to questions posed by Anakpawis Rep. Ariel Casilao, the House body learned that the PRA had already approved

in principle three of the 22 proposals after the developers complied with Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regulations.

These were the 360-ha Pasay reclamation project, the 140-ha Solar City project, and the Navotas Boulevard Business Park.

The PRA also divulged that there were 120 proposed reclamation projects in the whole country, Casilao said in a statement.

"Would these reclamation projects have adverse effects on the environment?" Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza asked Literal during the hearing.

"There is an effect, sir," the official replied. But he added that "systems" would be put in place to reduce the environmental impact of the reclamation projects.

Atienza, a former Manila mayor, fumed over Literal's remarks.

"You are aware that there will indeed be effects on the environment, and yet you will still let these projects proceed simply because the developers are instituting so-called systems to mitigate these effects?" he told the PRA official.

"If all these projects are allowed to proceed, the effects will be catastrophic for all of us. There seems to be a reclamation craze sweeping across the country and you just keep approving each one of them," Atienza said.

Threat to bay cleanup

Casilao also expressed alarm at Literal's admission. "This must be stopped as it is threatening for the genuine essence of the Manila Bay cleanup. The reclamation should be opposed," he said.

On the sidelines of his meeting with local officials on the bay's rehabilitation, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said

that all reclamation projects would be reviewed.

Palace has final say

Adding that the government was currently looking at 10 proposals, Año clarified that while his department could recommend whether or not the project should push through, Malacañang would have the last say.

On Feb. 4, President Duterte signed Executive Order No. 74 delegating the authority to approve reclamation projects to the PRA. He also placed the agency under the Office of the President, instead of the DENR.

Mr. Duterte issued the order amid an ongoing cleanup of Manila Bay, a polluted body of water that for many years had served as a repository of Metro Manila sewage and other wastes.

Last week, the Makabayan bloc filed House Bill No. 9067 declaring the bay a reclamation-free zone. —WITH A REPORT FROM AIE BALAGTAS SEE INQ



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LOOMING THREAT Members of the House Metro Manila development committee are concerned over the possible adverse effects posed by reclamation projects to Manila Bay. —LYN RILLON



Solons alarmed by 22 Manila Bay reclamation projects

BY JOYEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ
@joveemarie

At least 22 proposed reclamation projects in Manila Bay are awaiting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources's (DENR) approval, the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) on Monday said, sparking alarm from lawmakers

that the bay's rehabilitation might be for naught.

During the hearing of the House Committee on Metro Manila Development, PRA Assistant General Manager Joselito Gonzales said the 22 reclamation projects cover a 20,000-hectare pipeline.

"They [reclamation project proponents] have complied with

all the mandatory requirements," Gonzales told lawmakers.

All 22 reclamation projects will cover at least 10 percent of the 199,000-hectare Manila Bay—stretching from Cavite to Navotas.

According to Gonzales, the implementation of the projects will be gradual.

Party-list Rep. Ariel Casilaof Anakpawis said this confirmation

from the PRA is a threat to the genuine rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"This must be stopped, as it is threatening the genuine essence of the Manila Bay cleanup. The reclamation should be opposed," the lawmaker added.

Last week the Makabayan bloc filed House Bill 9067 declaring
SB "MANILA BAY," A2



THE children and the birds return to frolick at the Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard in Manila, amid the bay's ongoing cleaning and rehabilitation efforts. HONIE REYES

Manila Bay as a reclamation-free zone.

Failure of regulators—Atienza

SENIOR Deputy Minority Leader Lito Atienza of the Buhay party-list hit the PRA for its failure to effectively regulate the numerous reclamation projects all over the country.

"How many reclamation projects in the Manila Bay area are in the pipeline? How many reclamation projects in the whole country? What is the total area of all of these projects? Would these reclamation

projects have adverse effects on the environment?" Atienza asked the PRA.

"You have just admitted that in the Manila Bay area alone, there are 22 reclamation projects poised to commence, and over 100 more in different parts of the country. You are aware that there would indeed be effects on the environment, and yet you would still let these projects proceed simply because the developers were instituting so-called systems to mitigate these effects?" added Atienza.



22 Bay projects need ECC okay

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE 22 reclamation projects that will cover at least 10 percent of the 199,000-hectare Manila Bay must be approved by the Environment department before these are gradually implemented, officials said Monday.

At a congressional hearing conducted by the House special committee on Metro Manila Development Authority on the Manila Bay rehabilitation and reclamation, Philippine Reclamation Authority officials admitted having

ple going down or sitting on the seawall.

The 22 reclamation projects cover a total 20,000 hectares of Manila Bay that stretches from Cavite to Navotas. These have been widely criticized over fears of their adverse effects on the environment.

Gonzales said the implementation of the projects would be gradual.

Also during the hearing, lawmakers slammed PRA officials for their failure to address the concerns raised before approving the projects.

Deputy Minority Leader Lito Atienza warned that the reclamation area of Manila Bay would suffer "catastrophic effects" in light of various natural disasters that come into the country.

Marikina City Rep. Bayani Fernando, former chairman of the Metro Manila Develop-

ment Authority, is not convinced that the 22 reclamation projects will benefit the poor.

serious environmental issues that should be resolved by the Environment department. "They [the reclamation project proponents] have complied with all the mandatory requirements," said PRA Assistant General Manager Joselito Gonzales during the hearing presided by Quezon City Rep. Winston Castelo, the panel's chairman.

Meanwhile, the authorities on Monday reinstalled a barrier to prevent people from frolicking on a beach in Manila Bay as the cleanup of its polluted waters entered its second week.

The barrier in front of the US Embassy, first put up last Wednesday, was taken down on Sunday, allowing hundreds of sightseers to venture into the area famous for its view of the sunset.

Orange plastic barriers and caution tapes have resealed off the beach, preventing peo-

ment Authority, is not convinced that the 22 reclamation projects will benefit the poor.

"I do not see any benefit the poor will get from these projects. It will only make the rich richer," he said.

Rep. Ariel Casilao said the statement from PRA officials confirming 22 reclamation projects was a threat to the genuine rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The PRA confirmed that there are 22 reclamation projects covering 20,000 hectares in the pipeline. Out of the 22, the 360-hectare Pasay reclamation project, the 140-hectare Solar City Project and the Navotas Boulevard Business Park have already been approved by the PRA and complied with the DENR process. The PRA also said there were 120 proposed reclamation projects in the whole country.



House panel questions impact of Manila Bay reclamation

THE HOUSE committee on Metro Manila Development on Monday raised concerns about the Manila Bay cleanup, questioning plans for further reclamation.

"There are many possibly destructive effects of the planned reclamation," Buhay Party-list Rep. Jose L. Atienza, Jr. told the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) during the committee meeting on the status of the Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Mr. Atienza, a former Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), cited as an example reclamation projects affecting Navotas City.

"Before and after the Dagat-Dagatan area was reclaimed, Navotas never flooded, but now Navotas always experiences flooding," he said.

In response, the PRA argued it ensures the Authority screens reclamation projects and flags questionable plans that may have a negative impact on the environment.

"We also have our own environment department. We attend hearings, we even sit in the review committee of DENR to carefully scrutinize the environmental impacts as presented in the environmental impact study of each particular reclamation proponent," PRA Assistant General Manager for Land Development, Construction and Technical Services Joselito D. Gonzales told the panel.

"We study and analyze all scientific data; we study and analyze all modellings, storm surges, liquifac-

tion, land subsidence, all negative issues. If by any chance we see there is something wrong, or something not in accordance with internal standards or scientific data, by all means, we have the power to reject or not issue a notice to proceed," he said.

The PRA reported that there are 22 pending reclamation projects in Manila Bay, at varying stages of approval, covering about 20,000 hectares.

The PRA said reclamation projects help protect coastlines and generate employment.

"In Pasay City, Solaire employs 5,500 people, while City of Dreams employs 4,500 people, while Okada Manila employs nearly 8,000. And that's just from three casino-resorts," PRA Assistant Manager for Reclamation and Regulation Joselito John M. Literal said in the same hearing.

"Another benefit of reclamation is coastal defense, if the project is well-designed, which we're making sure of," he added.

Marikina-1st District Rep. Bayani F. Fernando proposed that the reclaimed area be zoned for industrial use, instead of residential or commercial space.

"From what I've seen in other countries, they reclaim the sea more for industrial use, not for residential," Mr. Bayani, who also chairs the Committee on public works and highways, said. "They reclaim areas mostly for industrial to take advantage of the sea for transport."

— Charmaine A. Tadalán



Explain absence from Manila Bay meet, mayors told

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO and GHIO ONG

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) will issue an order to have mayors who did not attend yesterday's meeting on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay explain their absence, a source said yesterday.

The official, who requested anonymity since he is not authorized to speak on the issue, said four Metro Manila mayors were not at the meeting, held behind closed doors at the New World Manila Bay Hotel in Manila.

The DILG has yet to identify which of the mayors from nearby provinces were absent, the source added.

DILG Secretary Eduardo Año asked the 178 mayors who were expected to attend the meeting to pledge their "full support and cooperation" to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

"The secretary said that those who did not attend the meeting will be issued a show cause order. It was not, however, clear if the same order will be issued to the mayors who sent representatives to act on their behalf during the meeting," the source said.

The source said that the DILG's main concern in convening the 178 mayors is to come up with a unified action on how to address the liquid and solid waste management problem that contributed to the deterioration of the bay.

"Aside from seeking the support of the local government units, the DILG wants to identify the specific responsibilities of the local government units (LGUs) in the rehabilitation of Manila

Bay and how to sustain its rehabilitation in the coming years," the source said.

Mayors of towns and cities within the Manila Bay watershed area in the National Capital Region, Central Luzon and Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) attended the forum.

Aside from the DILG, officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the lead agency tasked to clean up Manila Bay, also attended the forum.

Año cited the writ of continuing mandamus issued by the Supreme Court (SC) on Dec. 18, 2008 ordering the DILG, DENR and 11 other agencies to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

To ensure compliance with the SC order, the DILG directed LGUs to do their parts in helping the government rehabilitate the bay.

Local officials who do not comply with the DILG directive may face an administrative charge of dereliction of duty before the Office of the Ombudsman, DILG spokesman Jonathan Malaya said.

The rehabilitation program, also called the "Battle for Manila Bay," was launched on Jan. 27.

Improvement

DENR Undersecretary Sherwin Rigor said the coli-

form level at an area of the bay that receives waste from three outfalls – between the United States embassy and the Manila Yacht Club along Roxas Boulevard – significantly dropped since Jan. 28.

From an average of 330 million most probable number for every 100 milliliters of water, the DENR recorded the coliform content of the following outfalls: 7.9 million mpn from the Salas outfall at the Pedro Gil area, 35 million mpn from the Remedios outfall and 92 million mpn at the Estero de Abad outfall near the Manila Yacht Club, Rigor said yesterday.

The Manila Bay inter-agency council aims to make this portion of Manila Bay fit for swimming and other forms of water recreation by reducing the coliform level to 100 mpn per 100 milliliters.

Meanwhile, Año said the council can still recommend if a reclamation project in Manila Bay can be approved despite the Philippine Reclamation Authority's transfer from the DENR to the Office of the President.

Around 10 reclamation projects in the bay area would be reviewed, Año told reporters on the sidelines of the meeting.

He did not identify the projects, but earlier reports said around 26,230 hectares of Manila Bay could undergo reclamation.

Año said the council would check if the projects comply with the Solid Waste Management Act, the Clean Water Law and the Philippine Fisheries Code.



HATAW!

D'YARYO NG BAYAN



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DILG: NCR mayors walang takas sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay

PINULONG kahapon ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) ang lahat ng alkalde sa Metro Manila para masigurong makitiisa ang kanilang mga nasasakupan sa tinaguriang "Battle of Manila Bay."

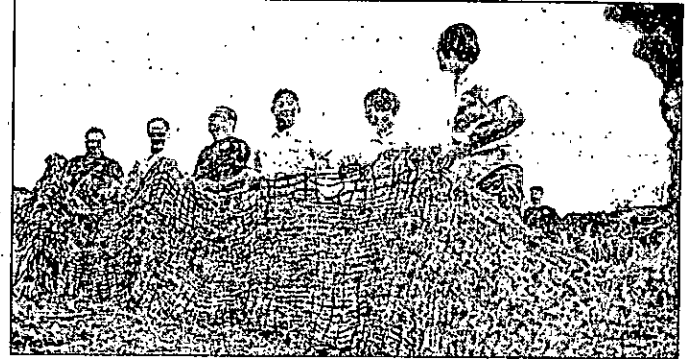
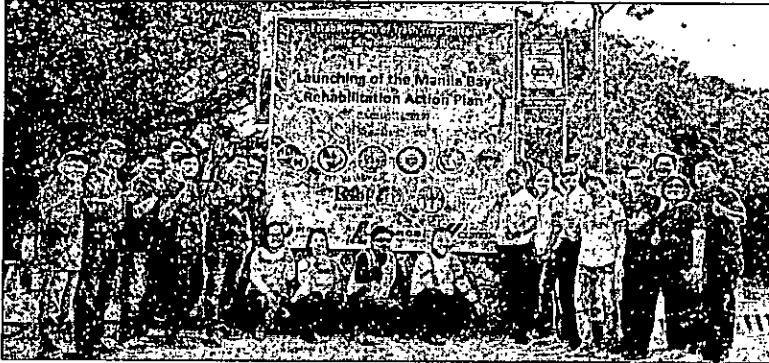
Ayon kay DILG Sec. Eduardo Año, layunin ng Local Chief Executives' Forum na maipabatid sa mga mayor ang kanilang papel bilang mga lider para sa rehabilitasyon ng Baywalk.

Pinayuhan ng kalihim ang mga alkalde na manguna sa paglilinis at pangangalaga sa mga

daluyan ng tubig sa kanilang lugar para mahikayat din ang kanilang mga residente na gawin ang hakbang.

"Ang mga pamahalaang lokal ang siyang kailangan ng manguna sa mga hakbangan sa paglilinis, rehabilitasyon, at pangangalaga ng katubigan ng Manila Bay. Kung gayon, hinihiling na sila ay mas maging masigasig sa paghikayat ng suporta at pakikipagtulungan ng kanilang mga nasasakupan at stakeholders upang maibalik ang ganda ng Manila Bay," ani Año.

Ipinaalala rin nito ang nilalaman ng Supreme Court decision noong 2008 at DILG resolution noong 2011 na nagsasabing responsibilidad ng lahat ng tanggapan ng pamahalaan na magtulungan para sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay.



MGB IV CALABARZON, together with members of Eastern Rizal Miners Association trooped to Antipolo-Angono River in full support of Manila Bay rehabilitation program. Mines Safety & Health Environment Social Development Division (MSESSD) chief, Dondie Sarmiento (3rd from left) led the laying of trash-trap curtain at Antipolo-Angono River, together with (from left) Gil Castro, administrative manager, Gozon Devt. Corp.; Teofilo Salcedo, NGO Representative Rizal; Dondie Sarmiento; Ariel Yson, Solid Cement Corp. community relations officer; Angelita Lee, VP Rapid City Realty and Devt. Corp. and Luisa Noche, plant manager, Monte Rock & Development Corp.

Manila Bay rehab gets support from CALABARZON

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) massive plan to rehabilitate the Manila Bay found thousands of supporters in different places sharing the same goal – to clean up the polluted Manila Bay.

In full support of DENR's Manila Bay Rehabilitation program, officials and employees of MGB IV CALABARZON, together with members of the Eastern Rizal Miners Association (ERMA) and Rizal Quarry Academy

Inc. trooped to Angono to put up a trash-trap curtain to address the source of rubbish that contributes to the pollution of Manila Bay.

Spearheaded by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the CALABARZON Region, the 50-meter trash-trap curtain captures trash before it flows downstream.

"Manila Bay pollutants come from different sources, and aside from the cleanup of its coastline, we believe it is crucial to directly fix the

source of pollution, which are in various areas all over the country," said MGB IV CALABARZON Regional Director Samuel Paragas.

The trash-trap is just one of the many ways to address capturing wastes from the source, and the one at Antipolo-Angono river is a pilot program for MGB CALABARZON.

"The success of our Manila Bay rehabilitation program, as well as all other policies and measures with regard to waste management remains in the

firm resolve of each of us to truly clean up and live up to having a clean environment," Paragas added.

The Manila Bay Rehabilitation program was approved by President Rodrigo Duterte with an allocated budget of P42.95 billion that will include cleanup activities, relocation of illegal settlers as well as apprehension of establishments that violate the Philippine Clean Water Act and other environmental laws.



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MWSS seeks masterplan for Manila Bay revival bid

STRESSING the need for collective efforts to ensure the revival of Manila Bay, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System called for the crafting of a masterplan to not only clean up the bay but also to ensure that sewerage and wastewater problems are addressed over the long term.

The MWSS is also taking to task its two concessionaires, Manila Water and Maynilad, to reengineer and fast track their roadmaps to provide waste-water treatment facilities to help arrest the deterioration of Manila Bay waters.

"We welcome all efforts of collaboration to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay now being spearheaded by President Duterte and Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu. However, I strongly recommend that a masterplan, which should have been done long time ago, is needed right now to properly address the sewerage and waste problems in Mega Manila," said MWSS Administrator Reynaldo V. Velasco.

According to Velasco, Manila Water follows a used water masterplan as approved by the MWSS/MWSS RO to full coverage until 2037 while Maynilad has its roadmap to attain 100 percent sewerage coverage in its concession area by 2037.

"Both Manila Water and Maynilad are supportive of the government's program to rehabilitate Manila Bay," Velasco stressed.

Maynilad contends that treating waste water is just one of the many components in rehabilitating Manila Bay.

The rehabilitation has to be viewed holistically, a view shared by Administrator Velasco. "The rehabilitation of Manila Bay waters is a shared responsibility and does not depend only on the two water concessionaires," Velasco added. Local government units and ordinary citizens have to do their share.

Maynilad president and CEO Ramoncito Fernandez said Maynilad's sewerage coverage in the West Zone is now at 20 percent with the completion of its 22nd wastewater facility, the Parañaque Water Reclamation Facility. By 2020, sewerage coverage will increase to 26 percent once the STPs being constructed in Valenzuela, Cavite City, and Muntinlupa are completed.

Meanwhile, Manila Water sees sewerage coverage to increase to 22 percent by 2022.

According to Manila Water, since the start of the concession, it has spent over P33 billion to fund used water infrastructure and operations and will continue to do so in the coming years. It has earmarked P36.8 billion until 2022 with a total of P115 billion until the end of the concession in 2037. Capital investment for wastewater infrastructure cost 4-5 times more than water

infrastructure.

"With wastewater infrastructure investment of more than P33 billion for the past twenty years, Manila Water has put up 40 wastewater treatment facilities and a sewer network spanning 360 kilometers to ensure proper treatment of domestic wastewater and help reverse the moribund state of our river systems," Manila Water president Ferdinand dela Cruz said.

"Maynilad has invested P23.3 billion in wastewater projects since 2007. About P1.6 billion is required to increase sewerage coverage by 1 percent," said Maynilad.

The construction of waste water facilities is also being slowed down by lack of land where these facilities can be situated, added to this is the problem of traffic resulting from excavation and the willingness of customers to connect to the sewerage system.

The lack of land has resulted in both concessionaires adopting innovative designs for their treatment facilities.

For his part, MWSS Chief Regulator Patrick Ty explained that the sewerage or environmental charge is not allocated for specific sewerage (or environmental protection) projects. Rather, it forms part of the overall tariff intended to reimburse Maynilad or Manila Water for their expenditures, whether for water or for wastewater.



What we need to do in Manila Bay

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LAST Saturday, I wrote about the 2008 decision of the Supreme Court Decision which ordered the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and other government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay in their different capacities. This continuing mandamus order, according to the Court, would remain pending until the cleanup was achieved.

Two months after that historic decision, on Febr. 10, 2009, the Court En Banc created the Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC), composed of two members of the Court and three technical experts (I was one of those originally appointed but stayed only for three years because of other commitments). MBAC was created to monitor the execution of the Court's decision and was chaired by Justice Presbitero Velasco, the ponente of the 2008 decision.

Following the recommendations of MBAC, the Court issued another resolution on Feb. 15, 2011 giving timeframes and tasks for the concerned agencies to implement the 2008 decision. In that decision, Associate Justices Antonio Carpio and Maria Lourdes Sereno dissented on the basis that the resolution constituted judicial overreach by usurping and performing executive functions by giving specific orders to the agencies on what to do to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay. The majority of the Court disagreed as for them the issuance of subsequent resolutions by the Court was simply an exercise of judicial power under Article VIII of the Constitution, the execution of the decision being an integral part of the adjudicative function of the Court. It should be noted that the 2011 Resolution was based on the discussions with the concerned agencies and none of the directives were new to them.

I summarize below these directives to emphasize that the government does not have to start from scratch in doing its work on Manila Bay. The 2011 resolution might be a good starting point now that the executive branch is giving the highest political priority to Manila Bay.

First, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was ordered to submit within a specified period the updated Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy. It was further ordered to submit the names and addresses of persons and compa-

nies in Metro Manila, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga and Bataan that generate toxic and hazardous waste.

Second, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) asked by the Court to order the mayors of all cities in Metro Manila; the governors of Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga and Bataan; and the mayors of all the cities and towns in said provinces, to inspect all factories, commercial establishments and private homes along the banks of the major river systems to determine if they have wastewater treatment facilities and/or hygienic septic tanks, as prescribed by existing laws, ordinances, rules and regulations.

Third, the MWSS was ordered to submit to the Court on or before June 30, 2011 the list of areas in Metro Manila, Rizal and Cavite that do not have the necessary wastewater treatment facilities.

Fourth, the Local Water Utilities Administration is ordered to submit on or before Sept. 30, 2011 its plan to provide, install, operate and maintain sewerage and sanitation facilities in said cities and towns and the completion period for said works.

“It is time now for the Supreme Court to remand this case to the lower court for execution of its final order.”

Fifth, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) was ordered to submit, among others, the names and addresses of the informal settlers in Metro Manila.

In addition, the Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Education, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Philippine National Police (PNP) were also ordered to do specific tasks related to the cleanup.

This was a comprehensive order but clearly it was not enough and 10 years after the original decision, Manila Bay is even more polluted; its environment degraded.

In my view, it is time now for the Supreme Court to remand this case to the lower court for execution of its final order. There is no value in this case remaining any further in the Supreme Court. Justice Velasco, the MBAC, and the Supreme Court were diligent in push-

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What we...

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ing this to the limit but clearly it is the executive branch, and specially the DENR and DILG with the local governments, that should get this done.

With the executive branch firmly in charge again of this monumental task of cleaning Manila Bay, I suggest an overall approach to that effort that would be based on two pillars—sustainable development and environmental justice. These two principles should guide the government strategy and interventions in Manila Bay.

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of present generations while not sacrificing the interests of future generations. Obviously it is not an option to stop economic activities in the Manila Bay area, a region which comprises all of Metro Manila and several Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog provinces. In fact, if anything, given the needs for the future of this region, more development is needed—but development that is environmentally smart and climate friendly while also sustainable and equitable. For that to be achieved, a long-term masterplan must be adopted, and faithfully implemented. Such a plan is now being developed by a team commissioned by the National Economic Development Au-

thority (disclosure: I have a mirror advising role in this project) and should be ready for presentation to the government this year.

As I pointed out last Saturday, the first thing to do is to accelerate the putting into place of a comprehensive sewerage system for the region. We must all be connected to a modern sewerage system in ten years. This was the big mistake of the Ramos government when it privatized the water system of Metro Manila; it should have embedded into the contracts of Manila Water and Maynilad stipulations that required them to prioritize sewerage.

As I have written, before, all major reclamation projects in the Manila Bay region must be stopped. It is immoral and criminal to allow activities that would lead to the destruction of Luneta, Manila Hotel, Intramuros, Chinatown, Ermita, our national museums, and other heritage sites. Thousands of lives could also be lost when the impact of reclamation combines with subsidence (the sinking of Metro Manila and surroundings because of unsustainable extraction of water) and climate change impact (sea level rise and storm surges) in future disasters.

Environmental justice must animate the clean-up of Manila Bay. The burden should fall principally on those who have polluted the Bay the most and those who have the resources to bear the costs. I support the DENR's enforcement efforts being directed

first at the big malls, hotels, and condominiums in the Roxas Boulevard area, but these efforts should be expanded to the whole region as every discharge from every establishment, village, household, and building ends up in the bay and if untreated pollutes its waters. The rich should be targeted first because they have the means to put up facilities to manage their waste and treat their waste water.

Informal settlers should be given a just transition, their relocation on or near their places of work and business (and their children's schools) to be given priority. It is never right to use the law to further marginalize and disadvantage the poor even for a good cause like a clean environment. In fact, environmental injustice usually backfires and makes matters worse for the environment.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu is a visionary and decisive leader. He has said that fixing Manila Bay requires a change of culture, in my view from a culture of reckless economic and bad land use decisions to sustainability as the norm for those decisions—from treating the poor terribly to making development truly inclusive. With sustainable development and environmental justice as our guiding principles, we will yet save Manila Bay.

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Clean Manila Bay a Duterte legacy



Manny B. Villar

THE ENTREPRENEUR

THE rehabilitation of Manila Bay is one major legacy that President Duterte can proudly leave to the nation. It is a gargantuan task but I believe the government can do it.

No Philippine president has succeeded in cleaning up Manila Bay, but Mr. Duterte can rely on his high trust rating to finish the job, just as he successfully implemented the rehabilitation of Boracay Island.

The Boracay cleanup has emboldened local government officials to implement environmental laws, especially the observance of the 30-meter easement from the shoreline. The paradise island in no time was significantly rehabilitated, with foreign and local tourists now finding Boracay a much cleaner destination.

The Manila Bay rehabilitation, meanwhile, will be more expansive because it requires the cooperation of several local government units and provinces. The job will require an integrated effort due to the number of people and companies that contribute to the filthy water of Manila Bay.

Laguna de Bay, several rivers,

tributaries and smaller waterways all empty their filth into Manila Bay, while many commercial establishments that operate near or along these bodies of water are allegedly contributing to the pollution.

Metro Manila and the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon, Pampanga and Bataan must also contribute to the rehabilitation efforts. Cleaning up Manila Bay will open many job opportunities along its coastal areas that stretch from Cavite and Metro Manila to the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Bataan.

A clean Manila Bay will certainly boost the lot of fishermen along its shoreline and maximize the tourism potential of the area. Hotels and other establishments along the coastline can serve more tourists who want to enjoy the sight of the Manila Bay sunset.

Secretary Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources concedes that the task is enormous because it will involve the relocation of thousands of informal settlers along Pasig River, esteros and canals.

"We need to find out where the outfalls come from individually, because in just one estero we can find lots of outfalls," said Cimatu. According to the DENR chief, the quality of water at Manila Bay known for its famous sunset is "330 million times" dirtier than the waters of Boracay Island.

Mr. Duterte was firm in his directive in early January to rehabilitate Manila Bay and warned establishments along the bay that he would not hesitate to order their closure if they challenge his call.

"Whether they like it or not, all of them, including the hotels, must put water treatment there for the waste discharge or else I will shut them down," said the President.

"Do not challenge me. If we do not have tourists, so be it. We are not going to die without them. You do something about your waste there, or we will have you closed down. That's for sure," he added.

Tourism may suffer a slight dent if the government will close down some business establishments and hotels found to be contributing to Manila Bay's pollution. But the

impact may not be worse as feared.

Foreign tourist arrivals still reached a record 7.12 million in 2018, up 7.6 percent from 6.62 million in 2017, despite the six-month closure of Boracay Island. The government may have missed the target to attract at least 7.4 million foreign tourists in 2018 because of the Boracay shutdown, but the figure will likely rebound in 2019 with a healthier and much-cleaner Boracay.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat remains upbeat in the aftermath of Boracay's closure. The Boracay shutdown, according to her, evidently became a blessing in disguise for secondary tourism spots to have a share of the limelight and attention they truly deserve.

"It shows that turning off the faucet when the water is unclear can bring a fresher flow in just an unexpected period of time," said Romulo Puyat.

Foreign and local tourists flocked to Siargao, Iloilo, Palawan, La Union, Romblon and Siquijor while Boracay was resolving its environmental issues.

The rehabilitation of Manila Bay may take a longer time than Boracay's cleanup. But it is an investment that will yield a long-term reward for the nation as a whole.

For comments, e-mail mbv.secretariat@gmail.com or visit www.mannyvillar.com.ph.



Remate

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

12 FEB 2019

DATE

HINDI PA PWEDENG GAWING PALIGUAN ANG MANILA BAY

NAGBABALA ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa publiko na hindi pa ligtas paliguan ang Manila Bay dahil sa mataas nitong fecal coliform bacteria sa tubig.

"Bathing in Manila Bay can expose people to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, which could increase their chances of developing illnesses," pahayag ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Ayon kay Cimatu, noong Enero 28, isang araw matapos ang paglulunsad ng rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ay nakapagtala ang water mo-

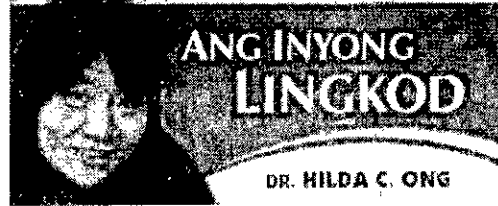
nitoring stations na nakalagay sa tabi ng baybayin na umabot sa 35 million most probable number (mpn) kada 100 milliliters ang tubig sa Rajah Soliman outfall (Station 5).

Naglagay ng walong water quality monitoring stations ang Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ng DENR sa kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard mula sa United States Embassy hanggang sa Manila Yacht Club.

Sa isa pang sampling station sa Padre Faura drainage outfall (Station 2) ay nakapagtala ang DENR ng 7.9 million fecal coliform count mpn/100ml.

Base sa pag-aaral, ang standard coliform level sa lahat ng coastal waters na ligtas paliguan at iba pang aktibidad sa tubig ay 100 mpn/100ml.

Naglabas ng babala ang kalihim ng DENR nang makuharian ng larawan ang napakaraming tao kabilang ang mga bata na naliligo sa tubig-



dagat sa kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard sa Manila matapos ang paglulunsad ng clean-up activity at malawakang rehabilitasyon na tinaguriang "Battle for Manila Bay".

Matapos ang isinagawang clean-up drive na dinaluhan ng mahigit 5,000 volunteers na nagtulong-tulong para sa panimulang paglilinis ng Manila Bay ay naging viral na sa social media ang naturang karagatan dahilan upang dayuhin ito ng maraming tao ngunit nilinaw ng kalihim na ang ibabaw pa lang ng tubig ang nalilinis.

"We have not yet gotten rid of pollutants such as those from untreated wastewater being discharged into the bay, so we strongly advise the public, especially children, to refrain from swimming in the bay for now," sabi pa ni Cimatu.

Ang iba pang water sampling sa ibang stations sa kahabaan ng Baywalk ay ang sumusunod: Station 1 (tabi ng US Embassy) 3,100 mpn/100ml; Station 3 (harap ng Diamond Hotel) 7,900 mpn/100ml; Station 4 (Carpet Shell Export and Museum) 2,400 mpn/100ml; Station 6 (harap ng Metrobank malapit sa Grand Hotel) 2,400 mpn/100ml; Station 7 (harap ng Admiral Hotel) 3,300 mpn/100ml at Station 8 (kabila ng Quirino Avenue stoplight) 13,000 mpn/100ml.



Wala kasing multa!

Kahit bawal, naliligo sa Manila Bay buhos pa rin

AMINADO ang pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila na marami pa ring pasaway ang dumadagsa sa Baseco na sakop ng Manila Bay para maligo dahil sa kawalan ng parusa sa mga lumalabag sa swimming ban dito.

Sinabi ni Manila city administrator Jojo Alcovendaz na malakas ang loob ng mga taga-Baseco compound na magbabad sa baybayin ng Baseco sa dating Pier 7 sa Tondo dahil hindi naman sila makakasuhan at mahuhuli sa paglabag sa ipinatutupad na swimming ban.

"Ipinagbabawal po ang paglangoy sa Manila Bay mula po sa kalsada ng Cortabitarte sa Quirino hanggang doon sa dating Pier 7 sa Tondo...

Pero sa ordinance, bawal lang, walang penalty eh," ayon kay Alcovendaz.

Sinabi ng mga barangay tanod na hanggang saway lang sa pagtatapon ng basura ang nagagawa nila dahil hindi nila mapigil ang mga ito sa paliligo.

Ayon kay Sabdullah Blah, barangay tanod sa BasecoNCompound, nawiwili ang mga residente at kalapit-lugar na maglunoy sa baybayin ng Baseco dahil libre at malinaw pa umano ang tubig dito.

Hindi rin umano natatakot ang mga taga-Baseco compound sa babala ng mga awtoridad na marumi pa ang Manila Bay at hindi pa ito ligtas na pagliguan. (Mia Billones)



Lalaki lumangoy sa Manila Bay inaresto

Kulungan ang bagsak ng isang lalaki makaraang lumangoy sa Manila Bay sa kabila ng mga bakod na inilagay ng mga Department of Public Works and Highways.

Unang nasampolan ang isang hindi kinilalang lalaki noong Linggo makaraang magtatakbo sa dagat at lumangoy bagama't may mga nakabantay na awtoridad.

Agad dinampot ang lalaki at dinala sa istasyon ng pulisya dahil sa paglabag sa Sec. 187 ng Revised City Ordinance.

Nitong Pebrero lamang matatandaang nauulat ang grade 6 student na nalunod sa nasabing dagat, masuwerte namang nakaligtas ang 11-anyos na biktima.

Paalala ng awtoridad hindi pa pinahihintulutan ang paglangoy sa Manila Bay at bawal ang pag-iwan ng anumang kalat sa baybayin.

Ang sinumang mapatunayang nagkalat sa Manila Bay ay pagmumultahin ng P500 o walong oras ng community service.



Sulat kay Editor

Makiisa sa clean-up drive sa Manila Bay

Dear Abante,
Sinabi ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na kailangan na ng agarang rehabilitasyon sa Tullahan River.

Kinakailangan na ng malawakang clean-up at dredging dahil sa dami na ng basura sa ilalim ng ilog.

Ang Tullahan River ay karugtong ng Manila Bay, kaya tiyak na ang basura na inaanod sa Tullahan ay siguradong babagsak sa Manila Bay.

Kailangan linisin ang pinakapuno, hindi iyong nakikita lamang dahil hindi rin magtatagal ay lalabas din ang tunay nitong anyo.

Sana ay matuto ring makinig ang mga namamasyal sa Manila Bay na huwag nang magkalat at huwag maliligo rito dahil hindi pa safe ang tubig ng Manila Bay para paliguan, lalo na sa mga bata.

Kung hindi maiwasan ang mga ito, marapat na isarado muna sa publiko ang Manila Bay sa Roxas Boulevard para maiwasan ang insidente katulad ng pagkalunod ng isang bata.

Ariana Davidson
Makati City



Mga reclamation project inaprubahan kahit bad sa Manila Bay

Isang malaking delubyo ang idudulot ng mga nakapormang reclamation project sa Manila Bay kapag pinayagan ng Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) na matuloy ang mga ito.

Sinabi ito ni Senior Deputy Minority Leader at Buhay Party-list Rep. Lito Atienza sa pagdinig ng House committee on Metro Manila development kahapon matapos usisain si PRA Assistant General Manager for Reclamation and Regulation Atty. Joseph Literal kung ilang reclamation project ang inaprubahan ng ahensiya sa Manila Bay at sa buong bansa.

"How many reclamation projects in the Manila Bay area are in the pipeline? How many reclamation projects in the whole country? What is the total area of all of these projects? Would these reclamation projects have adverse effects on the environment?" pagtatanong ni Atienza.

Nadismaya si Atienza sa tugon ng opisyal matapos malaman ang polisiya ng ahensiya na inaaprubahan ng PRA lahat ng aplikasyon para sa mga reclamation project nang hindi man lamang kinukunsidera ang seryosong epekto nito sa kalikasan.

"You have just admitted that in the Manila Bay area alone, there are 22 reclamation projects poised to commence, and over 100 more in different parts of the country. You are aware that there would indeed be effects on the environment, and yet you would still let these projects proceed simply because the developers were instituting so-called systems to mitigate these effects?" giit ni Atienza.

Binigyan-diin ni Atienza na kapag pinayagan ang lahat ng proyekto ay delubyo ang idudulot nito.

"If all these projects are allowed to proceed, the effects would be catastrophic for all of us. There seems to be a reclamation craze sweeping across the country and you just keep approving each one of them. Now that President Duterte has transferred the PRA under the Office of the President, malalaman na ngayon ng Presidente ang ginagawa ng mga tao sa ahensiyang ito," nanggigigil na pahayag ni Atienza.

Naniniwala si Atienza na tila nakakiling ang PRA pabor sa mga proyekto dahil wala itong hindi inaprubahan.

Sa testimonya ni Literal, inamin nito na umaabot sa 22 Manila Bay reclamation project ang nakabinbin sa PRA.

Kapag naaprubahan ang mga nasabing

proyekto ay makakaapekto ito sa 20,000 hektarya ng kabuuang 199,000 hektarya ng Manila Bay.

Ayon naman kay Anakpawis Party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao, tatlo sa mga nasabing proyekto ang inaprubahan na ng PRC at tumalima na umano sa proseso ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Kabilang dito ang 360 hektaryang Pasay reclamation project, 140 hektaryang Solar City project at ang Navotas Boulevard Business Park.

Ipinahayag naman ni PRA Assistant General Manager for Land Development, Construction and Technical Services Atty. Joselito Gonzales na lilikha ng trabaho ang mga reclamation project at puwedeng maging 'coastal defense' ang mga itatayong istraktura sa mga reclaimed area kung maayos ang disenyo.

Pero kinontra ito ni Atienza at sinabing marami na siyang dinaluhang konsultasyon at lumalabas na nagiging 'sales promotion' lamang ang mga sinasabing benepisyo na idudulot ng mga proyekto at hindi naman pinapakinggan ang opinyon ng mga environmental expert. (Aries Cano)



DENR: 2-month 'tawilis' fishing prohibition won't hurt that much

THE two-month moratorium on catching the diminishing *tawilis* population will not severely affect the income and livelihood of fishermen and other stakeholders of Taal Lake in Luzon.

This was underscored by Jose Elmer C. Bascos, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officer of Batangas, saying Taal Lake, the country's third largest lake after Laguna de Bay in Luzon and Lanao Lake in Mindanao, is home to other commercially viable fish like carp, tilapia and *bangus*.

Starting on March 1 until the end of April this year, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agriculture

(DA) through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and concerned local government units (LGUs) will ban the fishing of *tawilis* to allow the rare freshwater sardine to reproduce and replenish the lake with new stocks.

"It is just for two months. They [fishermen] can still go fishing in the lake and there are other fish that are more commercially viable than *tawilis*," Bascos told the BUSINESSMIRROR in a telephone interview.

He added that for the fishermen's personal consumption, catching *tawilis* will still be allowed.

"What is not allowed is fishing by huge volume," he stressed in Filipino. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



ECC delay stalls P12.2-B Kaliwa Dam project

By LOUISE
MAUREEN SIMEON

The construction of the long overdue P12.2-billion Kaliwa Dam may suffer further delays as its application for environmental compliance certificate remains hanging.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) has yet to complete some requirements for the ECC application.

"I think they are completing their requirements. But the point is, even if they submit all the documents, we will still be evaluating the viability of their activities," Environment

Undersecretary Jonas Leones told The STAR.

"We will still be the one to determine whether their mitigating measures will be able to address the possible disturbances or (in the area). If their measures are not okay, then we will not allow them," he said.

The MWSS earlier said it was optimistic to receive the ECC approval from the DENR next month.

Construction of the New Centennial Water Supply Project can only take off once the DENR issues the ECC, a requirement needed for any project in the country that poses potential environmental risk or impact.

"We cannot really determine

the impact of the project unless they comply with all the requirements. As of now, it's not yet complete, so chances are, it will be delayed," Leones said.

MWSS earlier said among the challenges it was facing was securing permits from the indigenous peoples (IPs) in the area.

It has been targeting to secure the ECC and finish the design until March to immediately proceed with the construction of the dam.

Last year, MWSS released an initial P565 million which was used to pay to the Department of Public Works and Highways for road construction.

Of the P12.2 billion construction cost of the project,

85 percent will be funded by the official development assistance from China amounting to P10.2 billion, while 15 percent or P2 billion will be shouldered by MWSS.

The project, which will supply additional 600 million liters of water per day to Metro Manila, will be undertaken by China Energy Engineering Corp. It was first approved by NEDA in 2014.

Financing scheme was changed in 2017 from a public-private partnership to official development assistance.

MWSS said the benefits of the project also include tourism boom, opening of new roads, employment opportunities and improved economy in the areas.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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5 Cebu hospitals given permits to transport, dispose hazardous wastes

By MINERVA BC NEWMAN

CEBUC CITY – The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Visayas has approved five applications for Permit to Transport (PTT) of hazardous wastes based on its records as of February 7.

The five Treatment, Storage and Disposal (TSD) facilities approved were from Mercado General Hospital Inc./Qualimed Cebu IT Park Clinic, Vicente Gullas Memorial Hospital, Sto. Niño Diagnostic Clinic, Dr. Ignacio M. Cortes Hospital Inc., and Amosup Seamen's Hospital-Cebu.

EMB-7 regional director William Cunado bared that based on the bureau's registration records, the estimated annual total generation of medical wastes from healthcare facilities in the region is at 1,259.43 metric tons.

As per Department of Health (DOH-7) records, Central Visayas has 565 healthcare facilities all over Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor. However, only 118 of the said facilities registered with EMB-7 have hazardous waste generators, Cunado said.

He strongly encouraged the remaining 447 healthcare facilities to comply with the provisions of RA-6969 to avoid future crisis both in environmental management in the community and that the bureau does not delay any permit

issuances for those who are compliant TSD operators.

Cunado noted that permit issuances that might be delayed could be due to the firm's non-compliance with the requirements of RA-6969 or the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act.

"TSD facilities found to have violated Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) and other permit conditions are

required to comply first before EMB-7 endorses their application to EMB Central Office for approval of their TSD Registration," Cunado added.

These requirements are to make sure that these business establishments are operating without causing harm to the environment as our objective is to protect the environment and the public from irresponsible operators, Cunado stated.



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Water experts gather at forum

MAYNILAD Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) president and chief executive officer Ramoncito Fernandez spoke before 377 global water experts from 27 countries at the 10th International Water Association (IWA) Conference held recently in Pasay City.

In his speech during the IWA "Efficient 2019" Conference, Fernandez emphasized the need for strong collaboration among global water stakeholders, as

emerging challenges now call for innovative solutions to ensure water security and sustainability.

"Each of us brings a unique perspective into water issues, and these perspectives help to complete the global outlook for the water industry in light of climate change, supply shortage and other issues," Fernandez said.

In his keynote message, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy

Cimatu cited the positive impact of public-private partnership on the improvement of water and wastewater services in Metro Manila.

Cimatu also elaborated on the DENR's efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay, acknowledging Maynilad's pledge of assistance for the ambitious cleanup effort.

The IWA "Efficient 2019" brought together global water experts and industry thought leaders to discuss and share solutions to

the challenges of efficient urban water management for sustainable development.

IWA is the largest network of water professionals from 130 countries with programs on developing research and projects focused on solutions for water and wastewater management and on organizing world-class events that bring the latest science, technology and best practice to the water sector at large.



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The Manila Times

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More hotels, tour hubs open in Boracay

THE Department of Tourism (DoT) has allowed more than 300 hotels and tourism hubs to operate in Boracay following a rigid assessment by the Inter-Agency Task Force that carried out the island's 6-month rehabilitation.

These establishments were allowed to accept reservations from visitors, bringing the number of available rooms to 11,612.

"[We] are pleased to announce that 316 accommodation establishments have complied with the requirements of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the DoT," the agency said in a statement.

The establishments that were opened include the Shangri-la Resort, Savoy Hotel Boracay, Fairways and Bluewater Resort, Hennan resorts and Alta Vista de Boracay.

All establishments were shut down during the rehabilitation of the island.

Boracay reopened on Oct. 26, 2018.

The Tourism Congress of the Philippines (TCP) said establishments that were still closed were expected to be fully operational in April.

NEIL JAYSON N. SERVALLOS



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From left: Eco-Mer and Divers Institute of Technology consultant William McGilton, MPIC Foundation president Melody Del Rosario, and marine ecology expert Professor Avigdor (AV) Abelson from Tel Aviv University in Israel.

Metro Pacific shores up Balayan Bay ecosystem

AS PART of its corporate social responsibility, Metro Pacific Investments Corporation Foundation, through its Shore It Up program, recently received a donation of 40 eco-reef modules which will be installed in Balayan Bay, one of the country's top scuba diving destinations.

Since 2016, MPIC Foundation has been nurturing a Coral Restoration Field Laboratory in Brgy. Solo in Mabini, Batangas to help restore the marine ecosystem of the area. In the past two years, it has laid 12 modules which have provided valuable data to help in the flourishing of aquatic life in the barangay.

Eco-Mer artificial reef units are made of marine concrete which has better larval attachment, higher survival rates of coral recruits, and wider niche range for higher species diversity, beyond any other commercial artificial reefs. The laboratory serves as an underwater work station for volunteer divers to study the fluid dynamics, coral growth potential at Eco-MER units per depth, and other scientific diving related to monitoring and coral restoration for Mabini.

The artificial coral reefs undergo monitoring and scientific activities to help enrich the Bay's ecosystem by setting up marine sanctuaries.

According to MPIC vice president for public relations and corporate communications Melody Del Rosario, Shore It Up started in 2009 as a coastal cleanup movement in the Anilao dive spot, and has expanded into a comprehensive marine biodiversity conservation program which covers underwater cleanups, mangrove propagation, giant clam rearrangement, artificial reef restoration, and community livelihood projects.

Shore It Up has been held in key coastal areas such as Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro; Subic Bay Freeport Zone; Hundred Islands National Park in Alaminos City, Pangasinan; Del Carmen in Siargao Island; Panglao and Pamilacan Islands in Bohol; Surigao City; Medina, Misamis Oriental; and Cordova, Cebu.

To sustain these environmental undertakings, the foundation helped establish Mangrove Propagation and Information Centers in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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HATAW!

D'YARYO NG BAYAN



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WETLAND CENTER GROUNDBREAKING. Magiging mas komportable ang pagbisita sa Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park, ang nag-iisang Ramsar site sa bansa na nasa urban setting sa pagtatayo ng Wetland Center na nagkaroon ng groundbreaking noong Biyernes. Pina-ngunahan ni Sen. Cynthia A. Villar, chair ng Senate environment committee, ang naturang gawain kasama sina (L-R): Director Jacqueline Cahican, DENR NCR Regional Executive Director at Pocholo D. Paragas, Chief Operating Officer, Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority. Sinabi ng re-electionist senator na mapapagiging ng wetland center ang edukasyon tungkol sa kahalagahan ng wetland at pangangalaga rito. (CAM)



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GSIS won't sell Baguio tree park

Pine stand will be spared from commercial development, pension fund official says

By Vincent Cabreza
@vincentcabrezaINQ

BAGUIO CITY—The city's foresters and environmental groups are drawing up plans for the management of a 1-hectare pocket forest, which Baguio children have asked President Duterte to spare from developers.

Kindergarten and elementary pupils of Baguio Pines Family Learning Center here wrote more than 60 letters, many illustrated with trees and stick figures using crayons, asking Mr. Duterte to stop developers from touching the tree park classified as an "investment area" of its owner, the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

In a Feb. 4 reply, Jesus Clint Aranas, GSIS president, said the agency "will neither sell the land where the park stands nor allow it to be converted into a commercial area by any party."

Concern for environment

"They can heave a sigh of relief because the GSIS property will remain the home of these beautiful trees," Aranas said in a statement posted on the pension fund's website.

"We all share the same concern for the environment. If we are responsible stewards of God's gifts, then we will surely reap the rewards such as having cool, clean and fresh air."

Should the Baguio government again offer to buy the pine tree stand given the GSIS' latest assurance, the City Environment and Parks Management Office (Cepmo) was prepared to treat the soil and replace infested trees to protect the woodland, Ruben Cervantes, city environmental officer, said on Monday.

It is the biggest patch of



TREE PARK This tree park, surrounded by government buildings, a shopping mall and a school, is among the remaining forested patches in Baguio City's commercial district. —EV ESPIRITU

trees in an area surrounded by the summer courthouses of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals; Luneta Hill, which is now occupied by a shopping mall; a convention center; and the University of the Philippines (UP) Baguio.

However, its pine tree population had been reduced from 800 to over 500, half of which suffered from *Ips calligraphus* infestation, according to a UP team.

Home to birds

Cervantes said city foresters tried to contain the infestation by cutting and burning down infected trees in 2014 when their help was

sought by the GSIS.

Around 24 bird species, like warblers, thrushes and the brown shrike, as well as grassland animals, are found in the tree park, according to the UP team.

These animals might be driven away because of man-made pollution when people started using the park as a toilet, so it would be Cepmo's task to clean up once city foresters acquired control over the area, Cervantes said.

The city government succeeded in blocking plans to lease the park to a developer in 2008 due to a public outcry.

But it failed to work out a deal with the GSIS, which was

willing to sell the tree park for P400 million in 2016, and again for P670 million in November 2017.

Mayor Mauricio Domogan last month said the GSIS was no longer willing to sell the property.

But Aranas said he was optimistic that the negotiations with the city government to buy the lot would "finally come to a fruitful resolution."

"I hope the good mayor would understand that the value of a property appreciates over time. In any decision, investment or otherwise, we have to ensure that this will help grow our funds to benefit our members and pensioners," he said. INQ



QC-MVP basura deal minadali ni Bistek?

PINAPALAGAN ng mga residente at environment group ang planong pagtatayo ng waste-to-energy project sa Quezon City dahil sa iaamba umano nitong peligro sa kapaligiran at kalusugan.

Ayon sa mga kritiko ng proyekto, kahina-hinala ang intensyon ng liderato ni Mayor Herbert 'Bistek' Bautista dahil kahit papatapos na ang termino nito sa Hunyo 30, 2019 ay pumasok pa ito sa isang public-private partnership at joint venture proposal sa consortium ng Covanta Energy, Macquarie Group at Metro Pacific Investments Corp. ng negosyanteng si Manny V. Pangilinan.

Kinukuwestyon nila ang umano'y puwersahang pagtutulak sa proyekto para maipasa ito sa konseho bago maipatupad ang pagbabawal sa paggawad ng award sa ilalim ng election ban para sa 2019 midterm elections.

Bahagi ng panukalang proyekto ang disenyo, pagtustos, konstruksyon, operasyon at maintenance ng panukalang Quezon City Integrated Solid Waste Management Facility na may kakayahan umanong magproseso ng hanggang 3,000 metrikong tonelada ng basura kada araw.

Sakaling maapfubahan, matatali umano ang pamahalaang lungsod at mga residente ng siyudad sa 35 taong kontrata simula sa araw ng operasyon nito at karagdagan pang 15 taon para sa posibleng pagpapalawig sa kontrata.

Inaalmahan ng mga environment group ang panukala dahil sa polusyon na ibubuga ng itatayong waste-to-energy plant na susunog sa mga basura para maging renewable energy.

Anila, ang pagsusunog ng basura ay lantarang paglabag sa Clean Air Act at Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

Sinikap ng **Abante** na hingan ng pahayag si Bautista subalit hindi pa ito nakokontak habang sinusulat ang balita.

Hiningi ng **Abante** ang panig ng Metro Pacific Investments Corp. sa kasunduan ngunit hindi ito nagbigay ng pahayag. (**Mia Billones/Eileen Mencias**)



19 ARESTADO SA ILLEGAL QUARRYING

NADAKIP ng mga ahente ng National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) ang 19 trabahador ng dalawang kumpanya na sangkot sa illegal quarrying sa dalawang magkahiwalay na operasyon sa Pampanga.

Ayon kay NBI Spokesman Deputy Director Ferdinand Lavin, kabilang sa mga naaresto ang mga manggagawa ng Sammi Vibro na sina Gi Man Lee, Jeong Sunimi, kapwa Korean national; John Paul Sumat, Jory Sabacan, Alberto Lingad, Joseph de Leon, Sandy Vosotros, Alex Basilio, Fernando Tomas, Tyron Manalo, Mark Glen Reyes, Rudy Libunao, Joey Madrona, Marcelino Bundoc at Lamix Abogan sa Dolores, Bacolor.

Naaresto naman sa panig, ng BM Marimla sina Alfer Nueva, Rodolfo Pineda, Higinio Javate at Ener dela Cruz sa Manibaug, Pasig, Pampanga.

Nagsagawa muna ng beripikasyon ang NBI sa Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB) kaya nabatiq na wala itong permit.

Dahil dito, nagkasa ng operasyon ang NBI noong Pebrero 7 sa mga nabanggit at dito naaktuhan ang mga susppek.

Nakita sa operasyon ang mga bulto ng minerals at mga kagamitan sa operasyon.

Sinampahan sa Prosecutor's General Task Force Environmental Laws ng Department of Justice (DOJ) ng kasong paglabag sa Sec. 103 (Theft of Mineral) ng RA 7942 o kilala bilang Philippine Mining Act of 1995 ang mga susppek.

(Mylene Alfonso)



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Go green, poll bets urged

By Bobby Ricohermoso

Various environment watchdogs on Monday gathered together and called on all political parties and candidates to be responsible and engage in what they call as green campaign activities and platforms.

They urged candidates to go "green" in both their electoral platform and campaign strategies.

The official campaign period starts 13 February, for senatorial bets and partylist groups.

The watchdogs also dared all political parties and candidates to incorporate ecological sustainability into their electoral platforms.

"We further ask them to show their concern for Mother Earth by rolling out an eco-friendly campaign that will not harm and pollute the ecosystems," their statement said.

For them, an eco-friendly campaign should be compliant with the country's electoral, environmental and health laws.



12 FEB 2019

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Solon slams PRA over care-free policy on enviro hazards

By Jester Manalastas and Joel dela Torre

A VETERAN solon slammed the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) for its failure to effectively regulate the numerous reclamation projects all over the country.

Deputy Minority Leader and Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza asked the PRA to explain why it allowed several reclamation projects in Manila Bay without considering the environmental hazards.

At yesterday's hearing

conducted by the Metro Manila Development Committee, Atienza inquired about the pending reclamation projects and how they would affect Manila Bay.

Atienza expressed extreme disappointment with the reply of PRA Assistant General Manager for Reclamation and Regulation Atty. Joseph Literal that the agency's prevailing policy is to approve all applications for reclamation projects without considering the

serious environmental impact.

Based on the record of the PRA, there are 22 reclamation projects poised to be completed and about 100 more in different parts of the country.

But Atienza said these projects indeed would affect the environment.

"If all these projects are allowed to proceed, the effects would be catastrophic for all of us. There seems to be a reclamation craze sweeping across the country and

you just keep approving each one of them!" he added.

The solon was elated when President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the transfer of the PRA under the Office of the President. "Malalaman na ngayon ng Presidente ang ginagawang mga tao sa ahensiyang ito," Atienza said.

Atienza also assailed the PRA's argument that reclamation projects such as Pasay's Entertainment City, would generate thousands of jobs. Meanwhile, Interior

and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año yesterday convened the 178 city and municipal mayors in Region III, IV-A and NCR within the Manila Bay watershed area as he kept the local chief executives abreast on their critical roles and responsibilities in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The mayors were reminded of their commitments on the herculean task in the Manila Bay clean up, rehabilitation and preservation program under Supreme

Court decision last December 18, 2012 and a resolution dated February 15, 2011.

"Local government units should be at the forefront of efforts to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve the waters of Manila Bay. They should, therefore, be more proactive in encouraging the support and cooperation of their constituents and other stakeholders to bring back the glory of Manila Bay," Año said during the meeting held at the New World Manila Bay Hotel.



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Climate change seen as top threat, US power a growing worry - poll

BERLIN (Reuters) – Climate change is the top security concern in a poll conducted by the Washington-based Pew Research Center, followed by Islamist terrorism and cyber attacks while respondents in a growing number of countries worried about the power and influence of the United States.

In 13 of 26 countries, people listed climate change as the top global threat, with the Islamic State militant group topping the list in eight and cyber attacks in four, the non-profit, non-partisan Pew Research Center said in its report.

Worries about climate change have increased sharply since 2013, with double-digit percentage point increases seen in countries including the United States, Mexico, France, Britain, South

Africa and Kenya, according to the poll of 27,612 people conducted between May and August, 2018.

North Korea's nuclear program and the global economy were also significant concerns, while respondents in Poland named Russian power and influence as the top threat.

The largest shift in sentiment centered on the United States, it said, with a median of 45 percent of people naming US power and influence as a threat in 2018, up from 25 percent in 2013, when Barack Obama was US president.

In 10 countries, including Germany, Japan and South Korea, roughly half of respondents or more saw US power and influence as a major threat to their nation, up from eight in 2017 and three

in 2013, the poll showed.

In Mexico, where those concerns have spiked since the election of US President Donald Trump, the percentage jumped to 64 percent, the poll showed.

Trump has railed against illegal migration and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and is pressing to build a wall between the two countries.

In 2018, a median of 61 percent of respondents across all countries represented viewed cyber attacks as a serious concern, up from 54 percent in 2017.

The number of countries that saw Islamic State as a threat fell by double-digit percentage points in Israel, Spain, the United States and Japan.