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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Asean Bamboo Network formed at Iloilo confab

A regional network comprised of environment officials, scientists and researchers in Southeast Asia was recently formed to explore the potentials of bamboo for environmental sustainability and economic resiliency, amid the threats brought by climate change. The creation of the Asean Bamboo Network was touted as the most prominent feature of the resolution adopted by participants in the first Asean Bamboo Congress held in Iloilo City this month. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the resolution was a "decisive output" that enabled formal commitment of signatories toward a climate-resilient future for the Southeast Asian region. Under the resolution, there will be enhanced partnerships across the region to come up with science-based strategies to improve the condition of bamboo forests. —JHESSET O. ENANO



ASEAN EXPLORES POTENTIAL Bamboo vs climate change

Signatories to the resolution have committed to enhance partnership to come up with science-based strategies in cultivating the conditions of bamboo forests and dependent industries in the region

By Maria Romero

Southeast Asian environment officials, scientists and researchers are looking at establishing a regional network that will explore the immense potential of bamboo for environmental sustainability and economic resiliency to combat climate change.

In the recently concluded first-ever ASEAN Bamboo Congress held in Iloilo City, ASEAN region stakeholders, as well as representatives from the World Bamboo Organization, Brazil, Qatar and Peru met to adopt a resolution establishing the ASEAN Bamboo Network.

According to Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, the adoption of the resolution was a "decisive output" of the conference as it would help realize "a sustainable and climate resilient future for the entire region."

"With this resolution, we are assuring that we will put our utmost endeavors in the continuous research and development in

bamboo production technologies, as well as stronger linkages within the ASEAN region," Cimatu was quoted saying.

However, the full implementation of the resolution would entail challenges that need science-based decision-making, linking up with all possible stakeholders and discourse partners.

To address such challenges, signatories to the resolution have committed to enhance partnership to come up with science-based strategies in cultivating the conditions of bamboo forests and dependent industries in the region.

They also granted to share best practices to increase the appreciation and acceptance of bamboo as a cost-effective green product as alternative to plastic, metal and wood materials.

To conclude, they agreed to hold the Bamboo Congress every three years to sustain the efforts on expanding ASEAN bamboo concerns in the world map, re-examine the strategies that have been undertaken, and bring into active discussion the new and emerging

challenges on bamboo that the region may have to engage in.

Meanwhile, Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau Director Sofio Quintana, who signed the resolution on behalf of Cimatu, expressed confidence the talks would result in "stronger regional collaboration on the promotion of bamboo for climate change adaptation and mitigation."

"We hope that the resolution presented and signed during the 1st ASEAN Bamboo Congress marks strengthened partnerships and research breakthroughs among bright minds as 'One ASEAN' for better climate change adaptation strategies and actions toward environmental sustainability and economic resiliency," Quintana said.

Bamboo is a recognized "versatile renewable resource" that protects the environment. It also improves the microclimate, controls soil erosion, protects riverbanks, lessens flash floods, aids as windbreak and seizes atmospheric carbon efficiently.



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FIRST PERSON ALEX MAGNO

Unclean

A few months ago, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu declared Manila Bay would be safe for swimming by the end of the year. That was grossly wishful thinking.

The safe level for bathing is a fecal coliform level of 100 most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliters (ml). The monitoring station at San Antonio de Abad in Malate last reported a fecal coliform level of 2.44 billion MPN per 100 ml.

A total of 17 river systems continuously dump untreated wastewater into the bay. A fifth of the polluted water flowing into the bay comes from the Pasig River alone.

A total of 178 local government units need to rein in the dumping of pollutants into river systems draining into the bay. All the coastal municipalities from Bataan down to Cavite need to clear tens of thousands of informal settlers dumping waste directly onto the waters. About half of all households, commercial establishments and factories dumping wastewater into the bay do not conform to treatment standards.

We might need a century to bring Manila Bay's water to "swimmable" levels.

Cleaning up Boracay was easy. The tiny island was shut down while rehabilitation happened. We cannot shut down all polluting human activity in Central Luzon, Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog as we clean up the bay.

A few weeks ago, the Supreme Court ordered the two water concessionaires to pay hefty fines for failing to comply with the Clean Water Act and installing full sewerage connections for their service areas. In addition, they are ordered to pay additional fines for every additional day of non-compliance.

If the DENR was indulging in wishful thinking, the Supreme Court order appears totally disconnected from reality – or at least what is possible given the circumstances.

After the SC order was announced, the usual know-nothing leftist agitators demanded the fines be reverted to the paying customers. They were opportunistically trying to score propaganda points entirely in defiance of what science says is possible. This is not the way to go if we want to achieve full treatment of all wastewater in the metropolis.

According to a Rappler report, Maynilad has invested over P23 billion since it started operating in 1997 to achieve 22.55% sewerage coverage in its service area. Every additional 1% connection to the water treatment system will require P2 billion in investments.

For its part, Manila Water is preparing P115 billion in investments to achieve full sewerage coverage by 2037. Only 15% of its service area is presently connected to water treatment facilities.

There are no shortcuts to achieving this. A sewerage system should precede urban sprawl. It did not, in Metro Manila's case, because of poor governance. We can only proceed installing that by digging up roads and putting connections underneath buildings. That can only be done at great cost and much time.

The Supreme Court, the DENR and the leftist agitators need to reconcile with the facts. The hefty fines will not help hasten the process. They will only make that process less affordable for all.





₱1.4 B for Manila Bay cleanup proposed

At least ₱1.4 billion will be used to sustain the cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay under the proposed 2020 national budget.

President Duterte has asked Congress to pass the budget proposal for next year that includes allocation for the Manila Bay cleanup in line with effective management of natural resources.

"Some ₱10.7 billion is provided to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to improve air and water quality management, as well as solid and hazardous waste control, among others," the President said

in his recent budget message to Congress.

"Furthermore, ₱1.4 billion has also been earmarked for the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program to help clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve the coastal and marine ecosystem of the Manila Bay," he added.

Early this year, the government launched the massive rehabilitation of Manila Bay amid concerns about the polluted waters, shortly after the six-month cleanup of Boracay Island.

The President, in his State-of-the-Nation Address last July, said the government has a long way

to go in the Manila Bay rehabilitation but is encouraged by the improved water results near Padre Faura St. in Ermita, Manila.

Duterte said the government intends to relocate informal settlers as well as threatened to shut down establishments that pollute the Manila Bay.

In the same budget message, the President said the government has allocated ₱26.4 billion to the DENR to facilitate the natural resources resiliency policies and implement resource management strategies including the rehabilitation of coastal areas.

"Coastal communities are in

need of effective resource management, given the degradation of marine ecosystems, overfishing, coastal hazards, and population growth," Duterte said.

He said ₱1.6 billion would be earmarked for the coastal and marine ecosystems rehabilitation that seeks to protect and restore the country's marine biodiversity and coastal habitats.

At least ₱73 million will go to the Environment and Natural Resources Resiliency program to create better-adapted ecosystems in vulnerable areas in the country such as forests and watersheds. **(Genalyn Kabiling)**



Water board approves release of water for farms

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has approved the resumption of water allocation for the irrigation of farms in Bulacan and Pampanga beginning September 1.

Water releases for the irrigation requirements of about 27,000-hectare farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga were temporarily shut down last May 16 after Angat Dam breached the 180-meter critical level for irrigation.

According to NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr., around 30 cubic meters per second (cms) of water will be allocated for irrigation starting September 1, as the water level at Angat Dam has returned to its 180-meter normal operating level on Monday morning.

Likewise, David said a slight adjustment in water allocation for Metro Manila's domestic use will be implemented during the same period. From 36 cms, domestic water allocation will be increased to 40 cms.

The domestic allocation has been at 36 cms or 3.1 billion liters per day since Angat Dam's water level fell below the 160-meter critical mark in June.

However, Angat Dam is still way below the 210-meter normal high water level during the rainy season.

David said the public should remain responsible in using water to ensure that the year-end elevation is sufficient to supply the multi-requirements on domestic supply, irrigation and energy during the dry season of 2020.



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Angat Dam back to operating level

Angat Dam, Metro Manila's main source of water, has returned to its minimum operating level following rains brought by tropical storms in the past weeks.

As of yesterday, Angat Dam's water elevation was at 180.07 meters, slightly above the 180-meter normal level.

"The current level of Angat Dam is expected to rise further with the incoming weather disturbance and projections of near normal rainfall for September by the state weather bureau," National Water Resources Board (NWRB) executive director Seville David Jr. said.

Starting Sept. 1, Seville said the NWRB would increase the allocation for Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. to 40 cubic meters per second from the current 36 cubic meters.

— Louise Maureen Simeon, Ramon Efren Lazaro



Angat Dam reaches normal level

ANGAT Dam, the primary source of Metro Manila's domestic water supply, was expected to reach its minimum operating level of 180 meters on Tuesday as its elevation was measured at 179.96 meters on Monday, the state-run weather bureau said on Monday.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) recorded Angat's elevation at 179.96 meters at 6 a.m. on Monday following a significant increase of 1.33 meters from the previous day.

Pagasa hydrologist Edgar de la Cruz said Angat might reach its normal level today if more rains and water from tributaries continue to fill the dam. He said the reservoir's level would further increase in the next few days due to rains from tropical depression "Jenny" that could make landfall in Northern Luzon.

Meanwhile, La Mesa and Ipo Dams, also sources of water for Metro Manila, maintained their respective water levels. La Mesa Dam's level slightly increased by 0.08 meters to 76.88 meters, while Ipo Dam's decreased by a paltry 0.01 meters to 101.05 meters.

Meanwhile, Ambuklao Dam increased by a significant 1.09 meters to 749.06 meters, while Pantabangan Dam was up by 0.33 meters to 196.25 meters. Other dams in Luzon recorded slight decreases: Binga Dam's water level fell by 0.83 meters to 573.51 meters; San Roque Dam, 0.75 meters to 264.55 meters; and Magat Dam by 0.12 meters to 183.64 meters.

All dams except for Pantabangan maintained their respective normal rule curve elevation: 745 meters for Ambuklao, 565 meters for Binga, 250.24 meters for San Roque and 181.76 meters for Magat. Pantabangan's normal operating level is 211.79 meters.

DIVINA NOVA JOY DELA CRUZ



NWRB restores water allocation for irrigation in Bulacan, P'panga

The National Water Resources Board has approved the resumption of water allocation for irrigation of farms in Bulacan and Pampanga beginning Sept. 1.

Water releases for the irrigation requirements of about 27,000 hectares of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga were temporarily shut down last May 16 after Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan breached the 180-meter critical level for irrigation.

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30 cubic meters per second of water will be allocated for irrigation starting Sept. 1, as the water level at Angat Dam returned to its 180-meter normal operating level yesterday morning.

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ters per day since Angat Dam's water level fell below the 160-meter critical mark in June.

However, Angat Dam is still way below the 210-meter normal high water level during the rainy season.

David said the public should remain responsible in using water to ensure that the year-end elevation is sufficient to supply the multi-requirements on domestic supply, irrigation, and energy during the dry season of 2020. **(Elialyn V. Ruiz)**



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SHOOTING STRAIGHT

BOBIT S. AVILA

PADS, a PWD team now world champions!

With tropical depression "Ineng" finally leaving the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR), then PAGASA tells us that Tropical Depression "Jenny" will soon enter PAR, which means more rains for the country. This is the problem of our nation which complains during summertime that we are running out of water, but that complaint disappears when we get more rains than we need. Thankfully Metro Manila has the La Mesa Dam and the Angat Dam where water becomes critical during summer time, but overflows when there is too much rain.



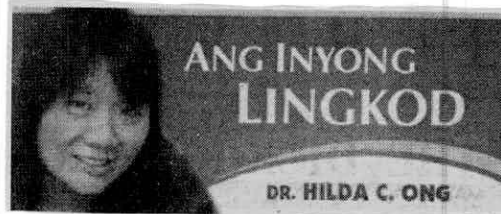
Unfortunately, Metro Cebu doesn't have facilities like the dams of Metro Manila. The Metropolitan Cebu Water District (MCWD) franchise area from Compostela in the North all the way to Talisay City in the South can only deliver 230,000 cubic meters of potable water. But the need for Metro Cebu is 560,000 cubic meters per day; hence the residents of Metro Cebu get their water from underground aquifer.

Mind you, all the water districts all over the country was enacted into a law in 1973 by then Pres. Ferdinand Marcos. The problem stems from the fact that all water districts have to serve their clients with potable water. Hence, people take a bath, wash their cars, flush their toilets with expensive to produce potable water. Back in 1973 people drink their water from the faucets. But today, the people living as squatters drink bottled water.

* * *

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ANTAS NG TUBIG SA ANGAT DAM, UMABOT NA SA MINIMUM OPERATING LEVEL NA 180 METERS

NOONG 1968 naisagawa ang ANGAT DAM kaya nasa li-mangput-isang (51) na taon na ngayon. Dati-rati, kakaunti lang ang mga establishment, industriya at mga taong naninirahan sa Metro Manila, iilan lang ang kumokunsumo ng tubig na nanggagaling sa Angat Dam kaya sapat ang tubig kahit sa panahon ng tag-init.

Noong ika-22 ng Hunyo 2019, binawasan ng NWRB ang alokasyon ng tubig para sa MWSS at sa mga konse-syunaryo nito ng 4 cubic meters per second (CMS), mula 40 CMS, ibinaba sa 36 CMS dahil ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam naging mas mababa sa kritikal na lebel na 160 meters.

Ang 4 CMS na ibabawas ay katumbas ng konsumo ng halos 700,000 na katao kada araw.

Base sa ulat, ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay nasa 181.01 metro (as of August 26, 2019, 7:00am) umabot na sa minimum operating level na 180 meters, ngunit, mababa pa rin ang antas ng tubig kung ikukumpara at sa normal high water level (NHWL) na 210 meters. Ang lebel ng tubig sa Ipo Dam ay nasa 101.04m at 76.88m sa La Mesa Dam. Tumaas man sa 181.01 mtrs ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, malayo pa rin sa end of the year target na 212 meters.

Ayon kay Dr. Seville Da-

vid, Jr. Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), mananatili sa 36cms metro kubiko bawat segundo alokasyon ang ipapatupad ng NWRB para sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) hanggang sa katapusan ng Agosto 2019.

Ibabalik ng NWRB ang kanilang dating alokasyon na 40CMS sa unang araw ng Setyembre 2019.

Patuloy pa rin ang panawagan ng NWRB sa publiko na maging responsable sa paggamit ng tubig, lalo na sa panahon ng tag-ulan, magipon ng tubig ulan upang may magamit sa pagdidilig ng mga pananim, panghugas ng sasakyan, sa paglinis ng bakuran, pang-flush sa banyo at panglinis ng sahig sa mga tahanan.

-ooOoo-





IN SARANGANI, DOLPHIN, WHALE SIGHTINGS MEAN BAY IS HEALTHY

GLAN, SARANGANI—Large groups of marine mammals have been seen in Sarangani Bay, an indication that the area declared protected by the government last year is healthy and safe for the sea creatures, according to an environment official.

While this is good news to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), local officials have raised concern over the volume of garbage seen in the bay.

Sabdullah Abubacar, DENR director for Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos), said the sighting of more than 100 marine mammals from Aug. 13 to 16 only showed a thriving marine life in the area and a healthy environment where food for them was still abundant.

Monitoring

Among those spotted by a government monitoring team were two dwarf or pygmy sperm whales in the waters of Malapatan town, between 40 and 60 spinner dolphins off Glan and Malapatan, between 150 and 200 Fraser's dolphins off General Santos City and Glan, four pygmy killer whales off Malapatan, and six Risso's dolphins off Glan.

The team was composed of personnel from the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS), the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Sarangani Province Environmental Conservation and Protection Center, and the General Santos City environment and natural resources office.

They saw the whales while conducting a third-quarter monitoring along the coast of Sarangani and in the towns of Maasim, Alabel, Malapatan and Glan.

Garbage problem

But while the team was glad at the sightings, they were worried about the patches of floating garbage that could harm cetaceans and other marine creatures. The garbage included plastic bottles and wrappers and other nonbiodegradable materials.

Several fishing vessels were



We can have economic development without setting aside the protection of our seascape and marine life

Steve Solon

Sarangani Governor

also present.

Abubacar, who also chairs the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB)-SBPS, ordered the team to strictly implement a garbage disposal system in the area and continue their monitoring.

Though it was not the first time that a large number of sea mammals had been seen in Sarangani Bay, it was the first time for the environment team to document them, he said.

Abubacar said the DENR and the Environmental Management Bureau had intensified their monitoring of activities of all establishments along the bay to protect marine life in the area.

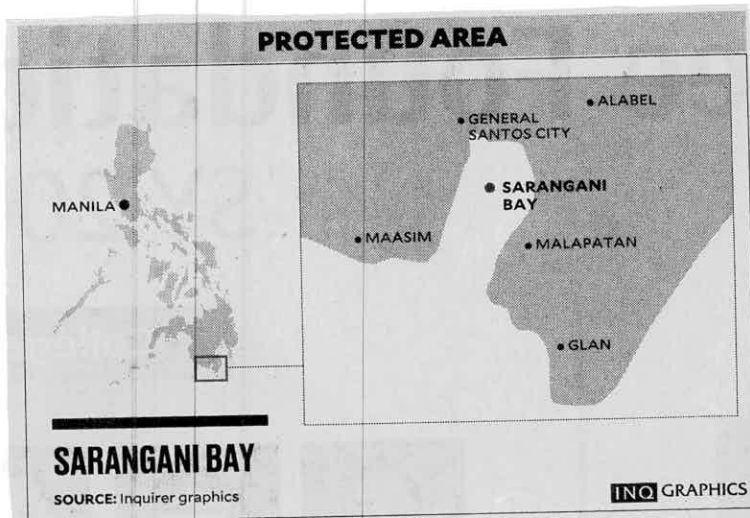
Regulation

Gov. Steve Solon, vice chair of the PAMB-SBPS, said the government must strictly enforce the law because these marine creatures could vanish if activities around the bay would not be regulated.

"The implementation of the rules must be strict so that everyone will follow," Solon said. "We can have economic development without setting aside the protection of our seascape and marine life."

Sarangani Bay was declared a protected area under Republic Act No. 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Area System Act of 2018. —EDWIN

O. FERNANDEZ INQ



SARANGANI BAY

SOURCE: Inquirer graphics

INO GRAPHICS



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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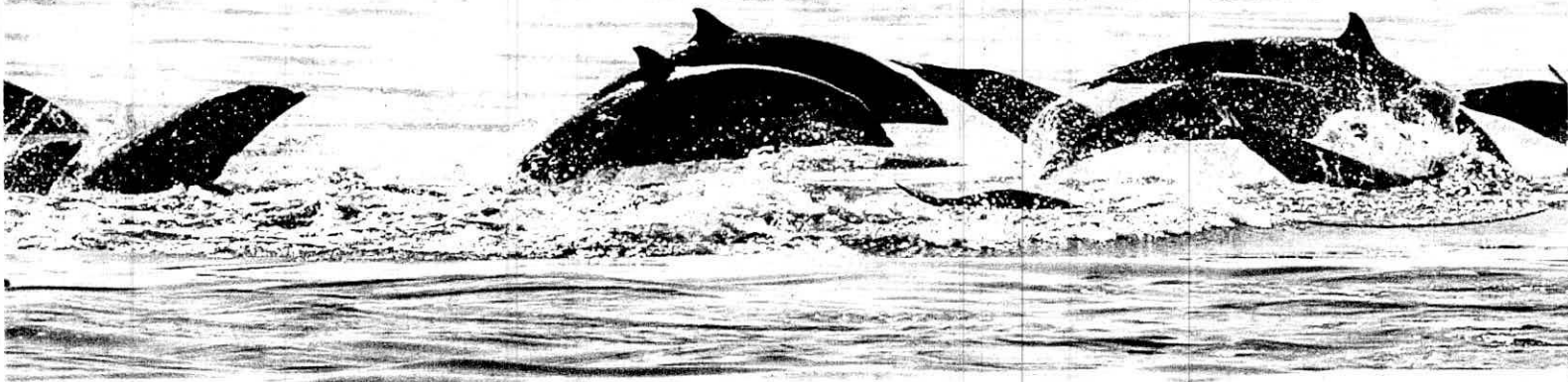
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

REGIONS

Editor
Robert Jaworski L. Abaño



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BAY PROTECTION The Sarangani government and the environment department in Soccsksargen region are joining hands to protect Sarangani Bay, where pods of dolphins and whales have been seen regularly.



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DENR-12: SARANGANI BAY'S WATER SAFE

COTABATO CITY: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 12 has given the full assurance that Sarangani Bay water is safe. The DENR in Region 12 is closely monitoring the coastal waters of Gen. Santos City and Sarangani in compliance with the Philippine Clean Water Act. In a recent Protected Area Management Board-Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS) executive committee meeting, EMB 12 Senior Environmental Management Specialist Willie Loyola, emphasized the need to sustain efforts to secure Sarangani Bay's water. Forty sampling stations were established covering General Santos City and the towns of Maasim, Alabel, Malapatan and Glan that compose the Sarangani Bay. Initial monitoring showed there were excesses in fecal coliform, dissolved oxygen, oil and grease, and the total suspended solids in SBPS and that these must be addressed immediately.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL



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Saving Sierra Madre Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) lead other government personnel and stakeholders in planting narra and mahogany seedlings in Upper Tabuating Reserve Irrigation Project in General Tinio town, Nueva Ecija.



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SAVING SIERRA MADRE. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources with the help of the local government unit of General Tinio, Nueva Ecija, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, Rotary Club and various stakeholders plant narra and mahogany seedlings in Upper Tabuating Reservoir Irrigation Project in Bgy Nazareth, General Tinio in their efforts to save Sierra Madre. Joining DENR personnel in the tree planting activity held on August 16 was DENR Muñoz City Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Jimmy Aberin (back, 2nd from right) of DENR-SCIS.



DENR BINUBUHAY ANG SIERRA MADRE. Sa layong pagyabungin muli ang bundok ng Sierra Madre, nagtanim ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources ng narra at mahogany seedlings sa bundok ng Sierra Madre, partikular sa Upper Tabuating Reservoir Irrigation Project sa Brgy. Nazareth, General Tinio, Nueva Ecija. Katuwang ng mga empleyado ng DENR si DENR Muñoz City Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Jimmy Aberin, local government unit ng General Tinio, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, Rotary Club at mga stakeholder.



CEMEX volunteers join river rehab project

MANILA Bay and its connecting rivers and estuaries have once had pristine waters fit for swimming and other forms of recreational activities. Today, more than 20 million Filipinos have no access to proper sanitation and sewage facilities, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

To do its part in saving crucial water systems that are essential to life, CEMEX Holdings Philippines participated in the "Manila BAYanihan para sa Kalikasan"—a multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes the Filipino tradition of "bayanihan" in working towards the simultaneous cleanup and restoration of waterways

in Metro Manila.

The project is led by the DENR together with the Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism, Department of Public Works and Highways, Laguna Lake Development Authority, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police Maritime Group, and Local Government Units, among other agencies.

"Nothing is impossible if we work together. We know that we can do this! Let's support 'Manila BAYanihan.' In doing these small steps for the environment, we can pass on to our children and to the next generation a clean and progressive Manila Bay," enthused Chito Maniago, Executive Director of

CEMEX Philippines Foundation and Regional Director for Corporate Communications and Public Affairs at CEMEX Philippines.

Leading the Marikina River clean-up drive were DENR Undersecretary Rodolfo Garcia, Marikina Vice Mayor Jose Fabian Cadiz, LLDA General Manager Jaime Medina, and PNP Maritime Group Chief Police Brigadier General R'win S. Pagkalinawan.

The river system clean-up sought to reinforce the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Project, driven by the vision to restore clean waters in the city and improve preservation efforts among communities for the long-term protection of rivers and tributaries.



Gina's grit and guts

Not a few people thought that former Department of Environment and Natural Resources secretary Gina Lopez was an oddball, even crazy. You would indeed be seen as such if you were a scion of one of the country's richest families, but on reaching adulthood, decided to turn your back on fame and fortune, and chose to spend your life away from the comforts that the family's wealth and stature guaranteed. In an op-ed tribute in another paper, veteran journalist Tony Lopez muses: "As an 18-year-old heiress in 1972, Gina had everything going for her—great wealth, great power, great organization. Instead of rushing headlong to join that organization, Gina left it." He admits to thinking she was crazy as he interviewed her and asked her "why someone of her stature of wealth, power and prestige would abandon it, hie away to faraway places like India, Portugal, Africa, in search of her soul. Instead of making the family fortune grow, she did things like yoga, meditation, praying upside down and Ananda Marga."

Many years later, her "craziness" was to be displayed in public as she single-handedly jostled with big business titans in a memorable forum on the economic and ecological effects of mining, organized jointly by Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Management Association of the Philippines, and Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines. Emotions ran high on both sides, and having witnessed her then, I have come to describe her as an authentic environmental warrior: one who took on the most formidable of opponents—many of them friends of her own or of her family—even to the sacrifice of these friendships, as she pursued her higher crusade



NO FREE LUNCH

CIELITO F. HABITO

against irresponsible and environmentally degrading mining activities in the country.

Gina was single-minded about her intense opposition to irresponsible mining and to open-pit mining in particular, and while I tried to reason with her about taking extreme positions, crazy or irrational is not how I would describe her as I witnessed her pursue her crusade firsthand. It was clear to me that her passion was informed and inflamed by hard evidence. More than once, she asked me to join her for a meal, wherein she would show numerous photographs she had taken herself, of various mining operations having led to hectares of carved-out forests and kilometers of severely discolored waterways. Her anger and anguish at all these was infectious, and her sincere empathy for aggrieved fellow Filipinos in affected communities was palpable.

Weeks before she called on then newly-elected President Duterte and found herself appointed into his Cabinet, she showed me

studies supported by ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Kalikasan on the total economic valuation of environmental impacts of mining operations in Bicol, Mindoro and Palawan. She wanted me to help assess the soundness of the analyses. These were carefully researched studies undertaken by interdisciplinary teams from Palawan State University, Bicol University, and Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology, by scholars with postgraduate degrees in fields such as agriculture, forestry, marine biology, health science, economics, accounting, sociology and anthropology. While she would consistently be emotional in delivering her message, hers was an evidence-based advocacy and crusade, which is why she managed to win much support, not the least from the President himself. For this, she was privately grateful, her close associates have told me, and saw him as a valuable ally in her cause. But in the end, her adversaries prevailed, and got her out of the job.

Gina leaves behind a legacy no one else can match. Last I directly heard from her was when she invited me repeatedly, still as environment secretary, to join her with others in field visits to various mine sites. She wanted us to see for ourselves what later motivated her to issue her controversial ban on open-pit mining. For one reason or another, I failed to make it to any of them. I still wish I had been able to join her, even once.

God bless Gina Lopez's soul. I am certain that her guts and grit have earned her God's favor, and His warm embrace into His bosom of eternal bliss and peace.

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THE ESSENTIAL GINA LOPEZ

I met Gina Lopez only last December when I was asked to document her achievements in a case study. I had watched her from afar, finding her somewhat difficult to define or classify. Was she a mere *dilletante* who had the leisure and resources to dabble in good works?

I became more interested when she began to show results of her advoca-

cies such as the cleanup of the Pasig River, the rehabilitation of La Mesa Dam forest, the rescue of children in difficult circumstances by Bantay Bata and other successes of the ABS-CBN Foundation that she headed. I watched her work for the passage of the Clean Air Act, do battle with loggers and miners and call attention to the need to preserve Palawan as the last hold-

out in the country's losing battle against environmental degradation.

But Gina remained an enigma. She was certainly a different breed from other so-called public servants. I admired her guts as Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources taking on big mining and even being labelled as a traitor to the privileged class her family belongs to, but I was taken aback when I saw her break into song after her appointment was rejected by the Commission on Appointments.

What was this woman made of? I had never heard a Cabinet member talk about her work in terms of "love" and "light," or break into song to illustrate her point. And seldom had I seen anyone lose her job in government and pick herself up quickly with more energy and optimism. I found my answer in two long interviews where, without filters, she let me into her life, her vision and her advocacies. The following are some choice quotes from the interview that, I feel, encapsulate the essential Gina Lopez.

On her time spent in Ananda Marga: "It was not a mission. It was more like character formation, a cocooning. Now I feel I have a mission. In esoteric terms, it is bringing the word of light and love in this country, and doing this in service of the light."

Running the ABS-CBN Foundation, Gina said, "The warrior me returned. I just evolved into it. In Ananda Marga, I had to be submissive. The culture was not to fight, but to give in. But when I got more and more in touch with injustice, the warrior in me emerged."

"I don't like suffering and I don't like injustice. In Bantay Bata, I was horrified at what was happening to the children, but that was more the compassionate me. It was my exposure to mining that ramped it up many steps higher."

On her work as head of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission: "The problem of the Pasig is one of consciousness. We feel that it is our *basurahan*. Structurally, the Pasig is the city's septic tank. Our septage goes directly into it without being filtered and all this goes into Manila Bay. The whole thing needs a structural overhaul. If we think our river is sacred, we would not throw our *basura* there."

When she came on board, the ABS-CBN Foundation would receive donations from the public and pass them on to NGOs to fund their projects. "I asked, why will we give it out? I want to use it myself because I want to give a report to the public. I really wanted to get my feet wet. I knew I would never give it to the *barangay* captain. And I would give the last bag of goods myself. Besides, I wasn't happy with how the NGOs were using the money. They have certain admin costs. But we work with volunteers at practically no additional cost, and we have done so well."

"When we work in an area, we ask for a commitment to values. *Ang pera ay kailangan para sa pamilya. Hindi para sa lasingan.* Without a commitment to values, it doesn't work. *Sagip Kapamilya* is what it is today because of this."



heart & mind
PAULYNN SICAM

'It is not the money that makes the difference, it is the heart. Love should be the main discerning factor whenever decisions are made.'



Gina Lopez



"In Leyte, where we invested in the environment, the community hit profits of P4 million from fishing, but the people were always fighting; they were selfish. My staff went there and said *tama na*, stop it. You have to love each other. When they stopped fighting and began caring for one another, they hit P9 million, more than double, at the end of 2017. I've seen it again and again, when you fight, that's the cause of all evil. When people love each other, they make more money."

Approaching donors, Gina said, "I talk about the vision, what I want to do on the ground level, my track record of things I've done in the past. I have the ability to make things happen. Then I offer something -- nobody gives freely anymore: The media is the key. A lot of the money is given to me because of ABS-CBN. We offer the donors free airtime, publicity, the assurance that the project will be high profile. If the project does well, it makes

ABS look good. And, as Daddy said, 'In the Service of the Filipino.' That's the leaning of ABS. It is more than just a business."

On her success as a fund-raiser. "I am a very heart-based person and therein lies my success. Because the Philippines is a heart-based country, when you go with your heart and you have data and projects that have succeeded, plus people feel you really care, it is a recipe for success in fund-raising. We are not a technical people. We are not planners. You hit home when you appeal to the heart. That's my experience."

"Being born in a position of privilege and social status brings with it a considerable amount of responsibility. It's like my mission in life. I want to do something great, to do something for the country because I'm in a position to do it. I'm not interested in business, but I want to have money (for my causes)."

At DENR, her rule was: "It is the duty of the state to make sure our people are well taken care of. That's in the Constitution. So, when mining companies use the people's land, it is the duty of mining companies to take care of them. You kill their livelihoods, you pay them. In my confirmation hearing, I was questioned for over an hour about the constitutional rights of miners. But what about the constitutional rights of the farmers?"

As head of the Cabinet cluster on the environment: "The problem with government is you make changes on the top and you get so caught up with things up there, but there's no effort to work together on the ground level. Hence, there is no area development effort with the objective to eradicate poverty. If government worked together on the ground level, we could eradicate poverty in one year. But it won't happen if the agencies don't work together on the ground."

During her brief stay in government, her most profound learning was, "It is not the money that makes the difference, it is the heart. At DENR, I had P26 billion, 14,000 employees. I had so much money. But if the people on the ground don't care, if they don't connect to the people, the ideas you have will not result in cost effectiveness. So, the key to making a difference is the heart. It's the caring."

Her non-negotiable performance indicator is people's lives. "If their lives don't improve, consider yourself a failure. My experience is if there is no commitment to values, no area development effort will work. If you just look at income and expenditures -- all numbers-- all of that doesn't work without a commitment to values. If you're just thinking of money, what will happen is when nobody is looking, you steal. And people will make use of the opportunity because they have to survive. But when you raise them to a higher level and give them a dream of a world where people care for each other, and all the other things you give them fit into that dream, that's what we want to implement -- the bigger dream that will give us the performance indicator we want on the ground level."

"The key to deliverance at the ground level is the anchoring on higher values. That's our nobility. That's who we are."

To non-believers: "I'm going to show them and come up with models where love is the foundation, and I will give them performance indicators of the economy, health, peace and order, which exceed theirs many times over. Then they can tell me that love doesn't work. Love should be the main discerning factor whenever decisions are made, not the money or whatever else. If you care for others, you will make the right decision."



Gina Lopez, environmental activist without equal

RICAR-
D O
"Rick"
Ramos —
prolific
writer,



**IN MY LINE
OF SIGHT**
**RAMON
T. TULFO**

walking encyclopedia, civic-minded citizen and my friend—writes to say that Executive Secretary Salvador "Bingbong" Medialdea is an incompetent official.

► **In my line of sight**A5

"Other than the pending P272 million reward money due (bounty hunter) Felicito Mejorado, the issue about ES Medialdea is incompetence," Rick said in a text message to me.

Rick said he has written Medialdea five letters since 2018 on various issues affecting the country and received not a single reply.

Medialdea's predecessors in the previous administrations would reply to Rick by mail on his complaints about misgovernment and other issues.

But not Medialdea, Rick Ramos said.

A public official like Medialdea should reply to letters from citizens. That's his bounden duty.

If he's too busy to write letters, he can have his staff do it for him.

After all, the Office of the President, which he heads, has a full staff complement, Rick said.

"Mon, you can quote me on this. I wrote him (Medialdea) on the Boracay issue and other matters in my capacity as former chairman of Task Force Boracay and managing director of Pilipinas Sandiwa Heritage Foundation," Rick said.

Apparently to cover his incompetence, Medialdea files libel cases against journalists like me who criticize him precisely on that issue and more.

There is a saying in Tagalog, "*Mahirap makipagtalos sa bobo* (You can't win an argument with a dullard)."

The same goes for Revenue Commissioner Caesar Dulay who is preventing me from leaving the country to perform my duty as special envoy to China for public diplomacy.

Dulay filed a petition with the Bureau of Immigration after he learned that I would be accompanying President Digong on his visit to China starting today.

Dulay said I might not return to the country because of the libel cases he and Medialdea have filed against me.

As I said in this space on Saturday, I didn't commit murder, robbery, rape, plunder, kidnapping or other heinous crimes for me to become a "flight risk."

All I did was criticize Dulay — and Medialdea, for that matter — as a journalist who perceives him as misbehaving.

For an Ateneo law graduate, who is supposed to be brilliant, Dulay is a dumb lawyer.

* * *

I implore Justice Secretary Mercado Guevarra to ask the government prosecutors in whose offices the libel cases against me were filed by Medialdea and Dulay to be fair and objective.

These prosecutors should be like the image of the blindfolded lady holding the scale of justice: weigh the evidence on their merit.

The prosecutors should not be intimidated by the lofty positions of the complainants against me because they are accountable only to the citizenry, not to them.

If these prosecutors file the cases in court to favor the complainants, they are no different in intelligence quotient (IQ) from them.

* * *

Regina Paz "Gina" Lopez, 65, loved Mother Earth so much she dedicated her life to protecting the environment in this part of the planet.

Gina would have become a senator after her appointment as Environment and Natural Resources secretary was rejected by the Commission on Appointments for her rabid anti-mining stance, had she made that her rallying cry.

But she didn't feel bitter over the rebuff as she continued to be a protector of the environment as a plain citizen.

The irony of it all is that the members of the bicameral CA who turned her down were of her own class, the powerful rich sitting in both houses of Congress, and some fellow members of the Duterte Cabinet.

Gina, scion of the super wealthy Lopez clan, once begged on the streets of India in her youth to find meaning in her life.

She found meaning late in her life by teaching the indigenous poor in the Philippines to protect the environment — the lakes, rivers, streams, forests and the sky — because they depend upon it for their food.

She traveled the length and breadth of the country teaching the people in the mountains the importance of protecting the environment.

Gina, when she was chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) — before her rejection by the CA — went so far as to befriend the outlawed New People's Army (NPA) so it would protect the forests and mountains from illegal loggers and miners.

I was witness to her fervor when I went with her on her on a trip to several provinces in Mindanao where she was received by *barrio* folk with a rousing welcome.

In every place she visited, where she spoke before a crowd, she would sing her favorite "I Believe I Can Fly" with an accompanying dance free of inhibition.

She was like a child when she was trying to protect the environment.

Now that Gina is gone, we have lost a champion of the environment.

Already, she is sorely missed.



Quesejoda



NI BUTCH M. QUEJADA

**Gina Lopez: Kaibigan
at tagapagtanggol ng
mamamayan at kalikasan**

NARITO ang mensahe ng NDFP-ST para kay Gina Lopez, na lubos na humanga, nakikidalamhati at nakikiramay sa pagkamatay nito. Ang National Democratic Front of the Philippines-Southern Tagalog (NDFP-ST) ay lubhang nalulungkot sa pagpanaw ni Regina Paz (Gina) L. Lopez, dating kalihim ng Department of Environment and

Natural Resources (DENR) at kasalukuyang Tagapangulo ng ABS-CBN Foundation Inc. dahil sa sakit sa kanser. Nais din nilang iparating ang taos pusong pakikiramay at pakikidalamhati sa mga naiwang pamilya, kaibigan at katrabaho ni Gina Lopez. Nakapanghihinayang at nawalan tayo ng isang Gina Lopez na seryoso, masugid at matapang na kampiyon ng kalikasan at kapaligiran. Nawala sa ating piling ang isang kasama na may mataas na pagpapahalaga sa pangangalaga at proteksyon ng likas na yaman ng bansa at kapaligiran laban sa mga mapanira, mapagsamantala at mandarambong na malalaking burgesyong komprador at mga dayuhang namumuhunan lalo na sa industriya ng pagmimina sa bansa. Sa kanyang pakikibaka para sa preserbasyon ng kalikasan, laging laman ng kanyang isip ang kinabukasan ng mga susunod na henerasyon na siyang makikinabang sa isang protektado at preserbado likas na tirahan (habitat) ng iba't ibang uri ng nabubuhay na hayop at halaman (wild life). Bagama't nagmula sa makapangyarihang angkan ng malaking negosyo, namumukod tangi si Gina Lopez na tinawid ang makitid na interes ng pinagmulang uri upang sinserong hanapin ang kanyang lugar sa piling ng paglilingkod sa mamamayan sa limitado nyang kapasidad at hangaring baguhin ang kalagayan ng masang api't pinagsasamantalahan sa paraang nakikita nyang kapakipakinabang—ang ipagtanggol ang kapaligiran at kalikasan laban sa mapangwasak na operasyon ng mga dambuhalang kumpanya sa pagmimina na nagdidisloka at sumisira sa kabuhayan at kinabukasan ng kasalukuyan at susunod na mga henerasyong Pilipino. Matatag siyang ginabayan ng kanyang prinsipyo na "mamamayan muna bago ang negosyo at tubo" at hindi niya ito ikinumpromiso sa gitna ng napakalakas na opusisyon ng malalaking korporasyong interes sa loob at labas ng gobyernong Duterte.

Hindi namin malilimutan ang katapangang ipinamalas ni Gina Lopez sa pagtatanggol at pakikipaglaban sa kapakanan ng mga magsasaka at katutubo sa rehiyong Timog Katagalugan. Bago pa siya naging miyembro ng gabinete ni Duterte, aktibo na si Gina Lopez sa kampanya sa pagtatanggol sa kalikasan at lupain ng mga katutubo sa rehiyon laban sa walang habas na pangwasak dito ng mga kumpanya sa pagmimina. Nuong maging Kalihim siya ng DENR, maraming kumpanya sa pagmimina sa rehiyon ang kanyang ipinasara, sinuspinde ang operasyon at kinansela

(Sundan sa page 4)



DENR SETS HEARINGS FOR KALIWA DAM PROJECT

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will hold three more public hearings on the P12-billion Kaliwa Dam project to assess the environmental impact of the proposed water source.

The hearings, in coordination with Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and through the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), are part of the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process with IP communities and other stakeholders in Quezon and Rizal provinces.

In its advisory, the DENR said the hearings were scheduled on Tuesday at Ynares Covered Court in Magsaysay Avenue, Teresa, Rizal; Wednesday at Chateau Marinero, Real-Infanta Road, Barangay Common, Infanta, Quezon; and on September 2 at the Covered Court in Barangay Daraitan, Tanay, Rizal.

The MWSS has applied for an environmental compliance certificate (ECC), which is necessary to jump-start the construction of the Kaliwa Dam project. The certification indicates that the project will not cause significant negative environmental impact.

Before the DENR issues the ECC, the proponent needs to secure the Environmental Impact Statement, a comprehensive study on the significant impacts of a project on the environment, which includes an environmental management plan/program that the proponent will fund and implement to protect the environment.

In a statement on Sunday, the MWSS explained the public hearings are being conducted with the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) to evaluate its mitigating measures to address possible disturbances in the affected communities of the dam project.

Last Friday, the two agencies held the first of a series of public hearings at General Nakar Sports Center, Barangay Poblacion, General Nakar, Quezon, with

IPs, farmers, pro-environment nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and affected residents, the MWSS said.

Though generally peaceful, the hearing was marked by a walkout allegedly by a group from the Dumagat tribe, who questioned the nine-day notice prior to the hearing.

The group, mostly young boys in Dumagat attire, was accompanied by different NGOs opposing the construction of the dam.

The MWSS said the notice of public hearing was published three consecutive times, with the first publication posted as early as August 8 or 16 days prior to the actual public hearing. The group did not return to the venue although the agency showed its proof of publication.

The MWSS, through the NCIP, is set to complete next month the FPIC assemblies for six clusters of IP communities in Quezon and another for Rizal.

"MWSS will submit an assessment report on the results of the public hearings and the DENR-EMB will then decide on MWSS' application," it added.

Kaliwa Dam, which has been in the pipeline since 1967, is part of the government's New Centennial Water Source Project that will supply additional 600 million liters per day to Metro Manila and the provinces of Cavite, Rizal and Bulacan.

According to the agency, the project, which will be funded through the Overseas Development Assistance with China providing P10.2 billion funding and the Philippines shelling out the remaining P2 billion, is meant not only to bridge the demand-supply deficit gap, but also reduce dependency on the Angat Dam.

Water sourced from the dam will be equally shared by the two water concessionaires — Manila Water Co. Inc. for the east zone and Maynilad Water Services Inc. for the west zone.

JORDEENE B. LAGARE



Joint Senate committee to look 'nto Kaliwa Dam impact on IPs

A joint Senate panel will look into the construction of the Kaliwa Dam project in Quezon and Rizal provinces Tuesday and its possible impact on indigenous peoples (IPs).

The Senate committees on cultural communities, public works and finance will tackle Senate Resolution No. 76, particularly on the displacement of IPs or the Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs).

The Resolution argued that under Republic Act No. 8371, or the The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997, requires projects to obtain free and prior in-

formed consent (FPIC) from IPs and ICCs.

"Despite the requirement of free and prior informed consent, as provided by RA 8371, the IPs/ICCs oppose and state that no consent was obtained," according to the resolution, filed by Senator Imee R. Marcos.

"The Sectors Opposed to the Kaliwa Dam, or 'STOP Kaliwa Dam,' said that the government was merely using the present water crisis to aggressively push the project."

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) is set to complete the commu-

nity assemblies with Quezon IPs through the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) next month.

The New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project intends to supply 600 million liters per day; which can be expanded to 2,400 MLD when a conveyance pipe is connected to the Kanan River.

The Resolution noted that as of March 2019, Manila Water Co., Inc. can no longer service its concession area's 1,600-1,740 MLD demand.

The project is funded through a \$211-million loan agreement be-

tween the MWSS and the Export-Import Bank of China, signed on Nov. 20, 2018.

The planned Kaliwa Dam Project is also among the China-funded projects that face scrutiny over the presence of a provision that will pledge Philippine "patrimonial assets" as collateral.

The MWSS, meanwhile, was questioned by the Commission on Audit for irregularities in its selection process which allowed potential contractors to bid without meeting all the eligibility requirements. — **Charmaine A. Tadalan**



LGU flagged over delayed hospital waste collection

By ELIZABETH MARCELO

The Commission on Audit (COA) has called out the provincial government of Laguna for the delayed collection of hazardous waste from public hospitals.

In a 2018 annual audit report, the COA said the service provider hired by the provincial government managed to collect hospital waste from one to five times per month only.

The COA said Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 mandates that biodegradable and hazardous wastes should not be stored longer than two days.

It said extended storage could result in microbial growth, putrefaction and

odor.

The COA questioned the P3.55-million contract that the provincial government entered into with the service provider.

It said the contract did not provide a definite schedule and number of waste collection.

State auditors said the contract did not contain provisions that impose fines against the service provider in case of a delay or failure in the delivery of services.

The COA said the absence

of such provisions violated RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act.

In a reply, the provincial government agreed to include in the contract provisions on waste collection schedule and imposition of fines.

Aside from the provincial government, the COA also called out the Laguna Medical Center (LMC) for improper handling and storage of its biohazard wastes.

The COA said ocular inspection conducted by the audit team disclosed several violations on the proper storage of wastes as provided under RA 9003.

State auditors said the hospital does not maintain

separate or color-coded containers for the segregation of compostable, non-recyclable, recyclable or special wastes.

The COA said the containers for infectious waste were not marked with the international infectious substance symbol.

It said some waste receptacles have no covers, making them susceptible to insect infestation.

The COA ordered the provincial government to regularly monitor the LMC and ensure its compliance with the provisions of RA 9003 and the Health Care Waste Management Manual.

The provincial government vowed to strictly implement RA 9003.



Panukala sa regulasyon ng paggamit ng plastic products umusad na sa Senado

ISINUSULONG sa Senado ang tuluyang pagbabawal sa paggamit ng "single-use plastics" containers.

Layunin nito na mapangalagaan ang kapaligiran laban sa mga plastic products na nagdudulot ng polusyon sa kapaligiran.

Sa kanyang Senate Bill No. 40, sinabi ni Senator Francis Pangilinan na napapanahon ang pagsabatas sa Single-Use

Management Act of 2019.

Layunin nito na tuluyan nang ipagbawal ang paggamit ng disposable plastics, kabilang ang cellophane products na ginagamit sa bilang grocery bags, food packaging, films water bottles, straws, stirrers, styros, cups, sachets at plastic cutlery.

"The mismanaged plastic waste per day is due to the sachet economy of the country and its problem-

atic waste disposal," ayon pa kay Pangilinan.

Kapag ito ay naging ganap na batas, ang mga food establishments, convenience stores, supermarkets at retailers ay obligadong sumunod sa pagbabawal sa paggamit ng single-use plastics.

Ang lalabag dito ay papatawan ng multa bukod pa sa posibleng business permit revocation.

Sa kabilang bansa, ang mga indibiduwal, kumpanya o mga samahang susunod sa batas ay bibigyan naman ng incentives.

Kasabay nito ay naghain rin si Senator Cynthia Villar Senate Bill No. 333 or the Single-Use Plastic Product Regulation Act of 2019.

Layunin naman nito na makabuo ng isang Special Fund for Single-use Plastic Regulation.

Sa pag-aaral ng United Nations ay napag-alaman na higit sa kalahati ng mga plastic products ay nauuwi lamang bilang mga basura.

Kabilang sa listahan ng mga bansa na mataas ang bilang sa paggamit ng plastic products ay ang China, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam at Pilipinas.

Sa Pilipinas pa lamang ay umaabot na sa 164 million piraso ng sachets ang nagagamit araw-araw.

Kaugnay nito ay inilunsad naman ng NutriAsia na siyang manufacturer ng Datu Puti Vinegar, Silver Swan, UFC Catsup at Mang Tomas ang pagbabawas sa paggamit ng plastic containers sa pamamagitan ng eco-friendly strategies.

Kasama dito ang paglunsad ng NutriAsia Inc. ng mga refilling station sa Metro Manila at ilang mga lalawigan.

Kabilang dito ang BYOB o "Bring Your Own Bottle" booths. (Mula sa *Radio Inquirer*)



pagmamay-ari ni Virgie Garcia.

MICROPLASTICS SINUSURI ANG PANGANIB SA INUMING TUBIG

NILINAW ng World Health Organization (WHO) na sinusuri pa rin ang microplastics sa inuming tubig kahit pa nabatid na hindi ito mapanganib sa kalusugan ng tao.

Sa pahayag ni WHO coordinator of Water and Sanitation na si Bruce Gordon na limitado pa ang presensya ng microplastics o maliit na particle ng plastic sa inuming tubig sa gripo at bottled drinking water kaya mahirap

pang pagkatiwalaan ang resulta ng naunang pag-aaral.

Lumabas sa unang ulat ng ahensiya na mababa pa ang posibilidad na maging mapanganib sa tao ang microplastics sa inuming tubig.

“The headline messages to reassure drinking water consumers around the world, that based on this assessment, our assessment of the risk is that it’s low,” dagdag ni Gordon.

Hinimok ng WHO

ang mga gumagawa ng research na magsagawa ng karagdagang pag-aaral sa mga ito para matukoy ang epekto sa tao.

Nanawagan din ang grupo para sa crack-down ng mga plastic nang mabawasan na ang exposure ng tao sa microplastics.

“We urgently need to know more about the health impact of microplastics because they are everywhere — including in our drinking water,” ang pahayag ni

WHO Public Health Department director Maria Neira.

“We also need to stop the rise in plastic pollution worldwide,” dagdag pa nito.

Napabilang ang Filipinas sa mga bansang nagtatapon ng pinakamaraming plastic sa karagatan.

Batay sa 2015 report ng environmental campaigner na Ocean Conservancy at ng McKinsey Center for Business and Environment, aabot

sa 60 porsiyento ng plastic waste na napunta sa anyong-tubig ang nanggagaling sa mga bansa sa Asya na kinabibilangan ng China, Indonesia, Filipinas, Vietnam, at Thailand.

Nabatid na tumaas ang pangangailangan para sa mga produktong ginagamitan ng plastik pero hindi nakaagapay ang impraestruktura para sa wastong pagtatapon ng basurang plastik na hindi agad nabubulok.



Higit na pananaliksik hinggil sa microplastics

NANAWAGAN kamakailan ang World Health Organization (WHO) hinggil sa higit na pananaliksik sa epekto sa kalusugan ng microplastics matapos lumabas kamakailan ang pag-aaral kung saan nakitaan ng mga microplastics ang inuming tubig.

"We urgently need to know more about the health impact of microplastics because they are everywhere -- including in our drinking-water," pahayag ni Maria Neira, eksperto mula sa WHO.

Ayon kay Neira, base sa kanilang limitadong kaalaman, hindi nagdudulot ng masamang epekto sa ngayon ang microplastics pollution sa mga inuming tubig, ngunit nangangailangan pa ito ng higit na pag-aaral.

Kailangan, aniyang mapigilan ang pagtaas ng polusyon sa plastic sa mundo.

"WHO recommends drinking water suppliers and regulators prioritize removing microbial pathogens and chemicals that are known risks to human health, such as those causing deadly diarrhoeal diseases," ayon pa sa kanyang pahayag.

"Microplastics larger than 150 micrometers are not likely to be absorbed in the human body and uptake of smaller particles is expected to be limited," ayon sa pinabagong resulta ng pag-aaral hinggil sa microplastics analysis, na nagdulot ng pangamba sa WHO.

Isa pang natuklasan sa pananaliksik, ang banta ng microplastics na nadiskubre at inilimbag sa journal ng Science Advances ng isang grupo ng mga mananaliksik na nakatuklas ng 10,000 plastic particles per liter sa Arctic na sumama sa mga nyebe o snow, base na rin sa naging ulat ng BBC kamakailan.

Ikinokonsidera ng NGO at ng mga international organization, tulad ng UN ang polusyon sa plastic bilang isa mga lumalalang problemang pangkapaligiran.

Samantala, upang maipahayag at maikalat ang impormasyon hinggil sa suliranin, itinalaga ng UN ang "Beat Plastic Pollution" bilang slogan nitong nakaraang taon World Environmental Day.

Anadolu/PNA



EDITORIAL

Do you love your country?

THE heroes whom the nation commemorated and honored on Monday, National Heroes' Day, certainly loved their country. While they came from diverse backgrounds, contexts and situations, all of them put national interests above their own. They made great sacrifices not to bask in glory but to serve the common good.

As a result of those sacrifices, Filipinos are where they are today. We are no longer under any colonizer. People can say what's on their mind, show dissent, criticize their government and offer suggestions on how their affairs can better be run. Everybody is able to participate, if not as public officials, then as part of civil society or their communities. Through technology, they can also make their voices heard through social media. Systems are in place—and, at least according to theory, a citizen can find recourse if he or she is aggrieved. Laws govern our way of life, and they are enforced, ideally.

Nobody will say however that

the times we live in these days are perfect, or ideal. We are still plagued by many problems that seem insurmountable, just because they have always been there. Corruption, incompetence, double standards, criminality and drugs are just a few of these ills. We still cannot seem to take off, despite the great potential from our natural resources and human capital. Despite having pockets of governance gems, we keep electing clowns to public office, and their pronouncements anger and divide us such that it is easy to lose sight of the things we need to do.

Does this mean that we do not love our country?

An unhinged senator recently

posed this question to a student whom he browbeat during a congressional hearing. Fortunately, the student responded with grace and maturity, saying that people can show their love of country in different ways. Most certainly, disagreeing with our leaders does not mean we are less patriotic.

No need for grand sweeping gestures or dramatic professions of patriotism. It's easy to say we love our country if it gives us the things it is supposed to give us: competent and upright leaders, good infrastructure, social justice and equitable opportunities for all. But in a scenario where none, or just some, of these are present, the fact that people keep themselves aware of what is going on, participate in the way know how, plod through despite their personal everyday struggles, and hope for the best outcomes nonetheless is a sign that we all love our country—and nobody has the right to tell us that we don't.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Manila Standard

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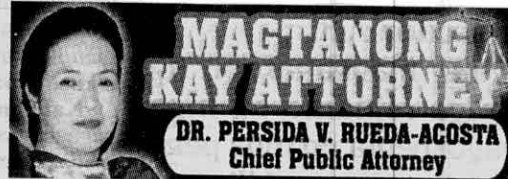
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Dear Chief Acosta,
Maaari ba akong magsumite ng aplikasyon para sa free patent ng tatlongdaang (300) metro kuwadrado nanging lupain sa siyudad ng Makati? — Maya

Dear Maya,
Para sa inyong kaalaman, nakasaad sa *Section 1* ng *Republic Act*



LIBRENG PATENT SA RESIDENTIAL LAND, DEPENDE SA LUGAR

No. 10023 o mas kilala bilang "*An Act Authorizing the Issuance of Free Patents to Residential Land*" na:

Section 1. Qualifications. - Any Filipino citizen who is an actual occupant of a residential land may apply for a Free Patent Title under this Act: Provided; That in highly urbanized cities, the land should not exceed two hundred (200) square meters; in other cities, it should not exceed five hundred (500) square meters; in first class and second class municipalities, it should not exceed seven hundred fifty (750) square meters; and in all other municipalities, it should not exceed one thousand (1,000) square meters; Provided, further, That the land applied for is not needed for public service and/or public use." (Binigyang-

diin)
Ibig sabihin, hindi dapat hihigit sa 200 metro kuwadrado ang lupang sasakupin ng aplikasyon para sa free patent sa mga siyudad na ikinokonsidera bilang "highly urbanized." Sa inyong sitwasyon, sa kadahilangang ang inyong lupain ay nasa siyudad ng Makati na highly urbanized city, hindi ninyo ito maaaring mai-apply sa pagkakaroon ng free patent dahil lagpas ito sa limitasyon na nakasaad sa batas.

Nawa ay nasagot namin ang inyong mga katanungan. Nais naming ipaalala sa inyo na ang opinyong ito ay nakabase sa inyong mga naisalaysay sa inyong liham at sa pagkakaintindi namin dito. Maaaring maiba ang opinyon kung mayroong karagdagang impormasyong ibibigay. Mas mainam kung personal kayong sasangguni sa abogado.



IMO Asean members set presentation of antipollution action plan in confab

By LORENZ S. MARASIGAN

[@lorenzmarasigan](#)

ASEAN members of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) are set to present their action plans for their maritime industries at the Second High-Level Regional Meeting on Marine Environment Protection of the Southeast Asian Seas (MEPSEAS) in Manila starting today, August 27, until Thursday.

In a news statement, the Maritime Industry Authority said in-

ternational consultants will also lead sessions and provide updates regarding the environment protection initiatives, as well as discuss the steps to be undertaken to capacitate countries in implementing convention requirements.

They will also lead sessions on the following: initial delivery of the training modules covering the Ballast Water Management Convention, Anti-fouling System Convention and Marpol Annex V.

“Moreover, the strategic partners will present relevant activi-

ties and programs, which support the objectives of the MEPSEAS Project, and will also explore possible areas of collaboration and modalities by which to pursue cooperation,” the statement read.

A four-year project that started in 2018, the MEPSEAS Project aims to provide assistance to East Asian nations in ratifying and implementing IMO Instruments for the protection of the marine environment. It is implemented in support of the Norwegian Agency for the Development Cooperation.



'Invisible' crisis of water quality threatens

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

humans, environment

"Invisible crisis of water quality" is threatening human and environmental well-being and slashing the economic potential of heavily polluted areas, according to a World Bank report.

The World Bank's study, *Quality Unknown: The Invis-*

ible Water Crisis, sheds new light on the ways that this process is taking place, using the world's largest global database on water quality, gathered from monitoring stations, remote sensor technology and machine learning tools.

The report argues that "without urgent action, water quality will continue to de-

teriorate, impacting human health, massively reducing food production and, consequently, stalling economic progress."

"Many other bodies of water, however, are polluting less dramatically, but just as dangerously, with a toxic cocktail of bacteria, sewage, chemicals and plastics, sucking oxygen

out of water supplies, and in effect, poisoning them," the report said.

The report's estimation of a one-third cut in the economic potential of affected regions, due to low water quality, is based on Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), which is a measure of how much oxygen is needed to remove waste organic matter

through decomposition, by bacteria that live in environments containing oxygen.

Once the BOD reaches a certain threshold, economic growth in areas downstream of the polluted water drops by up to one-third, because of the negative impacts on health, agriculture and ecosystems.

The use of nitrogen as a fer-

tilizer in agriculture is singled out as particularly problematic when it comes to maintaining water quality. Nitrogen enters rivers, lakes and oceans where it transforms into substances known as nitrates.

"Nitrates are harmful to young children, affecting their growth and brain development," the report said.



SENTIDO KOMUN

Celso Lagmay

Sino nga ba sa kanila?

BAGAMA'T kahapon pa natin ipinagdiwang ang National Heroes Day, hindi ko maaaring palampasin ang naturang makasaysayang okasyon nang hindi nagbibigay-pugay sa ating mga dakilang kababayan na namuhunan ng buhay at dugo sa pagtatanggol ng ating kasarinlan. Subalit sa kabila ng gayong pagkilala sa kanilang katapangan, hindi pa rin makatkat sa aking utak ang isang katanungan: Sino nga ba sa kanila ang tunay na mga bayani?

Kaakibat nito ang iba pang katanungan: Ang lahat ba ng mga nakahimlay sa Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB) ay maituturing na tunay na mga bayani? Ang lahat ba ng sinasabing mga dakilang Pilipino na ipinagpatayo natin ng mga bantayog ay talagang mga bayani? Kaugnay nito, isang kapatid sa pamamahayag ang pabirong nagpahiwatig: Ang mga hindi maituturing na mga bayani na nakalibing sa LNMB ay dapat hukayin at ilipat sa ibang libingan; at ang rebulto ng mga kunwari ay bayani ay marapat gibain. Naniniwala ako na ang ganitong paglapastangan sa alaala ng ating mga bayani at dakilang kababayan na hindi ko na pangangalanan ay walang puwang sa isang makataong lipunan.

Wala akong lubos na kabatiran sa mga pamantayan sa mga katangian ng sinumang itinuturing na mga bayani;

alinsunod sa National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) o sa alinmang ahensiya na inatasang gumanap ng gayong tungkulin. Sa sariling pananaw, ang maituturing na mga bayani ay hindi lamang yaong humawak ng armas at nakipagsagupaan sa mga kaaway, lalo na kung ang katapangan ng ilan sa kanila ay nabahiran ng pagtataksil sa kanilang mga kapanalig at sa ating bayan. Hindi ba may mga ulat sa ating kasaysayan na ang ilan sa kanila ay kumampi sa mga kalaban?

Maituturing na higit pa sa isang war veteran, halimbawa, ang ating mga Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) na nakatulong nang malaki sa pagsagip sa ating gulapay na ekonomiya. Sa bilyun-bilyong dolyar na ipinadadala nila sa ating bansa, nakaigppaw sa pagkalumpo ang kabuhayang pambansa. Dahil

dito, nasa wastong direksiyon ang pagpapatayo ng ospital para sa kanila at sa kanilang pamilya; at para sa sambayanang Pilipino.

Maituturing ding bayani ang ating mga environmentalist na malimit malagay sa panganib ang kanilang buhay sa pagtatanggol sa ating kapaligiran laban sa mga gahamang minero na wala nang inatupag kundi wasakin ang ating mga likas na kayamanan. Sa gayong mga pagsisikap, isang kapatid natin sa propesyon ang pinaslang; hanggang ngayon, mailap pa ang ganap na katarungan para sa kanya.

Totoo, marami pa sa ating mga kababayan mula sa iba't ibang sektor ng pakikipagsapalaran ang maituturing na mga bayani. Marapat lamang tiyakin na ang kanilang kadakilaan ay hindi nabahiran ng mga pag-aalinlangan.



Poverty reduction: President Duterte's lasting legacy

The Philippine Development Plan targets the reduction of the national poverty headcount to 14% in 2022 from 21.6% in 2015. Relatedly, rural poverty is expected to fall to 20% from 30%.

Are the targets doable? It is not a walk in the park and will require smart work.

It is 2019 now and the President has three years to go. The Philippine Statistics Authority's full 2018 report is coming out

soon and it does not look like poverty would go down below 20%. Therefore, the remaining years must reduce incidence by two percentage-points a year to reach 14%.

BENCHMARKS

The ASEAN poverty average of Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam is 8.5%, weighted by population. Never mind Malaysia with almost zero poverty. This means the Philippine poverty rate is 2.5 times higher.

Poverty is dominant in the agriculture sector in the Philippines. Rural poverty is 30%. About three-quarters of the poor are rural. Obviously, poverty in the country is an agriculture phenomenon. Poverty in the cities is only about 10%.

Some lessons:

Lesson 1: My engineering instructor claimed that a three-legged stool is the most stable even on uneven floor. It has something to do with the center of gravity.

Lesson 2: The 80:20 Rule. Also known as the Pareto Principle, it suggests that 20% of your activities will account for 80% of your results.

Lesson 3: Investment drives economic growth, and, more importantly, the productive capacity of the economy.

In terms of development, three legs can also be identified as crucial: Leadership at the national level, the Legislature, and the Local government units (LGUs).

The private sector — small to large producers — responds to the investment climate created by national policy and by the LGUs, down to the *barangays*.

LEADERSHIP

The ASEAN's poverty reduction success is rock solid. Rural poverty can be solved with sustained national resolve. In the past four decades, the Philippines' rural poverty reduction drive faltered badly. Agriculture lagged in productivity measures across major crops. There was an ingrained belief that with rice sufficiency, rural poverty will be reduced. Empirically, this is not so.

Rice only accounts for a third of farmland, coconut, another third. The rest are planted to corn, sugarcane, banana, other fruits, coffee, rubber, tobacco, and vegetables. In gross value added, crops account for 60%, with livestock and poultry, and fisheries and aquaculture, 20% each. And yet resource focus was only on a few commodities.

The leadership to achieve inclusive growth must make sure the right resources are invested in projects with the highest economic and social returns.

LEGISLATURE

The laws include, among many: the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 which devolved agriculture extension to the municipal LGUs, and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1986.

MAP INSIGHTS ROLANDO T. DY

Benchmarking ASEAN poverty incidence

Percent of population at national poverty line

	TOTAL	YEAR	RURAL	YEAR
Philippines	21.6	2015	30.0	2015
Malaysia	0.4	2016	1.6	2014
Indonesia	9.8	2018	13.2	2018
Thailand	7.9	2017	13.9	2013
Vietnam	5.8	2016	n.a.	n.a.

SOURCE: ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, PSA, INDONESIA RURAL (BPS)



The Acts of the Legislature affect implementation. It is worth noting that:

- 28 years have passed since the enactment of the LGC. A law can be amended after five years of effectivity. Big oversight.

The "ideal" extension hub is at the provincial capital. It has economies of manpower, career service and multiple specialists on agronomy, soils, pests control, water management, and marketing.

- Agrarian reform has not promoted investments. If it did, farm productivity should have increased since 1986. The five-hectare retention limit is too small for private investors. Too small for mechanization. The gross profits barely return the investments if overhead such as manager's salaries are taken into account. Small farms can be consolidated but there is a crying need for management and resources. It is time to raise retention limits to a viable size.

The LGUs are the front lines of rural development. They have the internal revenue allotment (IRA). They can raise taxes. The LGC mandates that 20% of IRA will be allotted to fund economic development.

Sadly, only a few municipal LGUs are development-driven.

One is Piddig, Ilocos Norte. It has gone into rice farm consolidation, coffee estates and processing, small farm reservoirs, and farm tourism. It has reduced poverty incidence.

Another is Alabat, Quezon thanks to Mayor Fernando Misa with his broad-based de-

Poverty Headcount,

PERCENT OF POPULATION

	OVERALL	HIGHEST	LOWEST
NCR	3.9		
Luzon	17.9	45.4 (Masbate)	2.0 (Bataan)
Visayas	28.1	56.2 (Siquijor)	5.2 (Guimaras)
Mindanao	35.9	71.9 (Lanao del Sur)	12.6 (Tawi-Tawi)
Philippines	21.6	-	-

SOURCE: PSA

velopment programs. Noted economist Ciel Habito cites cacao production and processing, coconut sugar production, honeybee culture, and production of hot chili pepper for food service chains.

At the provincial level, the proof of concept is Bataan: It has achieved the lowest poverty headcount of 2% among all localities in the country including Metro Manila (3.9%). It advocated for balance sectors.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Seal of Good Governance is a great way of benchmarking. In 2018, only 207 municipalities out of 1,489 passed while 17 of the 81 provinces passed. The criteria cover: financial administration, disaster preparedness, social protection, business friendliness and competitiveness, environmental management, tourism, culture and the arts.

Elected legislators and LGUs pledged their support to the President's plan to reduce poverty. Where are the proofs of concept?

Action is needed now and less talk.

A dramatic reduction in poverty can be the greatest legacy of President Duterte. It hits the pockets of over 20 million Filipinos, most of them in agriculture. It is also good for business. The strategic metric is poverty reduction by the provinces and municipalities.

The legs of development must work in seamless tandem to bring investments to the countryside and achieve the reduction of mass poverty. ■

This article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines or the MAP.

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Gov't has 199,000 job vacancies

By JESS DIAZ

Looking for a job? Try asking government agencies or checking their websites.

The bureaucracy, the country's biggest employer, has almost 199,000 job vacancies this year. However, filling

those jobs would hardly reduce unemployment.

The Philippine Statistics Authority has recently reported that as of last January, there were 2.3 million employable Filipinos without jobs.

According to the 303-page staffing summary submitted to the House of

Representatives by the Department of Budget and Management, the government has a total of 1,863,361 permanent positions this year, from the President down to the lowest-paid janitor or clerk.

Of that number, 1,664,586 are
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occupied, while 198,775 are vacant.

Of the more than 1.8 million jobs in the bureaucracy, more than half are in the Department of Education (DepEd), which has 999,159 positions, of which 907,133 are filled. That means that 92,026, mostly teaching posts, are vacant.

Teacher recruits in the public school system hold Salary Grade (SG) 11 and get a basic monthly pay of P20,754. SG 11 is also the pay level of government nurses.

There are reports that new education and nursing graduates are joining the Philippine National Police (PNP) due to

higher compensation. Early last year, President Duterte doubled the salaries of soldiers and policemen to P30,000.

The President has repeatedly promised to also increase remuneration for teachers and nurses.

After DepEd, the PNP has the second highest number of vacancies among state agencies. The national police organization has 214,410 in authorized jobs for uniformed personnel, of which 187,725 are occupied and 26,685 are unoccupied.

Add to the number of vacancies are 10,000 new Police Officer 1 positions Duterte has authorized to be created, and for which he included funds in the proposed P4.1-trillion

national budget for next year.

In his budget message to Congress, the President said the country would have attained the ideal ratio of one cop for every 500 Filipinos when all the needed policemen are recruited.

At 13,058, the Department of Health is in third place in terms of job vacancies. It has 72,479 authorized positions, of which 59,421 are filled.

In fourth place is the judiciary, which has 12,977 unfilled jobs. In fifth is the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (now Bangsamoro regional government), which has 9,088 vacancies.

The lowest monthly salary in government (SG 1) is P11,068, while the highest (SG 33), that of President Duterte, is P399,739.



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Eat less meat, says UN climate report

First word

W

ITH the

September UN climate summit in New York just a month away, the climate alarmists and proponents of climate apocalypse are stepping up their propaganda on climate change.



OBSERVER

YEN
MAKABENTA

►ObserverA4

Having committed to monitor the climate debate both ways, I owe it to readers to report the developments on the alarmist side, even when I disagree with their conclusions. This way, I can freely discuss the reports of climate realists, which debunk the alarms.

The most eye-catching stories of the alarmists are these two reports:

1. Eat less meat — On August 8, the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change came up with a new report in time for the UN climate summit on September 23. The special report bears this startling message: "Eat less meat: UN climate-change report calls for change to human diet."

2. Al Gore claims his predictions have come true. But he is challenged to prove that one of his predictions has been proven true.

Change in human diets

Greenhouse-gas emissions and the impacts of global warming will fall significantly short without drastic changes in global land use, agriculture and human diets, leading researchers warn in a high-level report commissioned by the United Nations.

The special report on climate change and land by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) describes plant-based diets as a major opportunity for mitigating and adapting to climate change and includes a policy recommendation to reduce meat consumption.

On August 8, the IPCC released a summary of the report, which is designed to inform upcoming climate negotiations amid the worsening global climate crisis. More than 100 experts, around half of whom hail from developing countries, worked to compile the report in recent months.

"We don't want to tell people what to eat," says Hans-Otto Pörtner, an ecologist who co-chairs the IPCC's working group on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. "But it would indeed be beneficial, for both climate and human health, if people in many rich countries consumed less meat, and if politics would create appropriate incentives to that effect."

Issues and Insights was dismissive of the report:

"It will eat up more than 1,000

pages and be hailed as the finest document since the Magna Carta. But the United Nations' land-use report will free no man, save not one life, lift no one out of poverty, nor have any perceptible impact on the global climate.

"It's not science, folks. it's a consensus devoid of any scientific methods used to validate a theory. The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] is a political body, not a research facility.

"The UN's IPCC has been producing junk for decades. Its 'findings' have consistently pressed the narrative that human activity, in particular the use of fossil fuels for energy, is warming the planet to dangerous temperatures through the greenhouse effect. Yet we look around and observe that nothing is happening outside of the natural variations. The data tell us the same."

Tim Ball and International Climate Science Coalition Executive Director Tom Harris published a *Washington Times* op-ed: "Why UN climate report cannot be trusted."

"The IPCC was formed for the purpose of seeking solutions to man-made global warming and is therefore always in search of a problem. Its mission 'was never to study the causes of climate change,' according to the Heartland Institute, but to instead frighten the world into submitting to policies the 'experts' tell us will avoid the inevitable disaster. So it will always produce work that bolsters the global warming narrative. It's really more of a propaganda shop for the UN and marketing firm for progressive policies than a scientific body seeking facts."

Gore's predictions

When asked by ABC TV about his 2006 prediction that we would reach the point of no return in 10 years if we didn't cut human greenhouse gas emissions, climate alarmist-in-chief Al Gore implied that his forecast was exactly right.

"Some changes unfortunately have already been locked in place," he told ABC's Jonathan Karl.

"Sea level increases are going to continue no matter what we do now. But, we can prevent much larger sea level increases. Much more rapid increases in tempera-

ture. The heat wave was in Europe. Now it's in the Arctic. We're seeing huge melting of the ice there. So, the warnings of the scientists 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, unfortunately were accurate."

So what has Gore been predicting for the planet? In his horror movie "An Inconvenient Truth," he claimed:

Sea levels could rise as much as 20 feet. He didn't provide a timeline, which was shrewd on his part. But even if he had said 20 inches, over 20 years, he'd still have been wrong. Sea level has been growing for about 10,000 years and, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, continues to rise about one-eighth of an inch per year.

Storms are going to grow stronger. There's no evidence they are stronger nor more frequent.

Mt. Kilimanjaro was losing its snow cap due to global warming. By April 2018, the mountain glaciers were taking their greatest snowfall in years. Two months later, Kilimanjaro was "covered by snow" for "an unusually long stint. But it's possible that all the snow and ice will be gone soon. Kilimanjaro is a strato-volcano, with a dormant cone that could erupt.

Point of no return. If we have truly gotten this far, why even care that "virtually all" of the Democratic candidates have agreed that global warming is a top issue? If we had passed the point of no return, there'd be no reason to maintain hope. The fact that Gore is looking for a "savior" from among the candidates means that even he doesn't believe things have gone too far.



TITLE: FAT LESS ...

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A year after the movie, Gore was found claiming that polar bears' "habitat is melting" and "they are literally being forced off the planet." It's possible, however, that there are four times as many polar bears as there were in the 1960s.

Also in 2007, Gore started making "statements about the possibility of a complete lack of summer sea ice in the Arctic by as early as 2013." Fact-checker Snopes concluded that "Gore definitely erred in his use of preliminary projections and misrepresentations of research."

A British judge found that "An Inconvenient Truth" contained "nine key scientific errors" and "ruled that it can only be shown

with guidance notes to prevent political indoctrination," the *Telegraph* reported in 2007.

Gore has been making declarative statements about global warming for about as long as he's been in the public eye. He has yet to prove a single claim, though.

Global temperature unknowable

My last item here is devastating for the alarmists. IPCC is quite certain Earth will be in trouble if the global temperature exceeds pre-industrial levels by 1.5 degrees Celsius or more. But how can anyone know? According to university research, "global temperature" is a meaningless concept.

"Discussions on global warming often refer to 'global temperature.' Yet the concept is thermodynamically as well as mathematically an impossibility," says *Science Daily*, paraphrasing Bjarne Andresen, a professor at the University of Copenhagen's Niels Bohr Institute, one of three authors of a paper questioning the validity of a 'global temperature.'"

A "temperature can be defined only for a homogeneous system," says Andresen. The climate is not regulated by a single temperature. Instead, "differences of temperatures drive the processes and create the storms, sea currents, thunder, etc. which make up the climate".

While it's "possible to treat temperature statistically locally," says *Science Daily*, "it is meaningless to talk about a global temperature for Earth. The globe consists of a huge number of components which one cannot just add up and average. That would correspond to calculating the average phone number in the phone book. That is meaningless."

So if global temperature is unknowable, how can the IPCC and the entire industry of alarmists and activists be so sure there exists a threshold we cannot pass?

The global warming alarmists have a credibility problem. Humans have been watching Doomsday prophets fail throughout history. They're so common we hardly notice them.



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Cites votes to ban trade in endangered otters

GENEVA—Over 100 countries voted on Sunday to ban the trade in smooth-coated otter and placed it on the Cites most endangered list. The proposal was adopted by 102 votes in favor, 15 against and 11 abstentions at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) meeting in Geneva. Ecologists said this was vital for the survival of the species which had seen numbers in the wild plummet by at least 30 percent in the past 30 years, a decline which had accelerated with the fad in Japan of keeping otters as pets. —AFP



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Otter: Silky mammal on endangered list

OVER 100 countries voted Sunday to ban the trade in the smooth-coated otter and placed it on the CITES most endangered list.

The proposal was adopted by 102 votes in favour, 15 against and 11

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Otter: Silky...

From A1

abstentions at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) meeting in Geneva.

Ecologists say this is vital for the survival of the species which has seen numbers in the wild plummet by at least 30 percent in the past 30 years, a decline which has accelerated with the fad in Japan of keeping otters as pets.

Otter cafes have sprung up in Japan offering baby otters for up to \$10,000.

Popular Instagrammers posting selfies with their pet otter may simply be seeking to warm the hearts of their sometimes hundreds of thousands of followers, but animal protection groups say the trend is posing an existential threat to the silky mammal.

"The illegal trade in otters has suddenly increased exponentially," Nicole Duplaix, who co-chairs the Otter Specialist Group at the International Union for Conservation of Nature, told AFP this month.



'LUNGS OF THE PLANET'

BRAZILIAN WARPLANES DUMP WATER ON BURNING FOREST IN AMAZON

BRASILIA/PORTO VELHO, BRAZIL—Brazilian warplanes are dumping water on the burning forest in the Amazon state of Rondonia, responding to a global outcry over the destruction of the world's largest tropical rain forest.

As of Sunday, President Jair Bolsonaro had authorized military operations in seven states to combat raging fires in the Amazon, responding to requests for assistance from their local governments, a spokesperson for his office said.

Reuters accompanied a fire-fighting brigade near the state capital of Porto Velho, where there were areas larger than football fields that had been charred, but active fires were contained to small areas of individual trees.

The dozen or so yellow clad

firefighters from environmental enforcement agency Ibama easily cleared brush from around a burning stump with a leaf blower, doused it with jets connected to water packs mounted on their backs and covered it in earth.

A video posted by the defense ministry on Saturday evening showed a military plane pumping thousands of liters of water out of two giant jets as it passed through clouds of smoke close to the forest canopy.

Help from G-7 leaders

The response came as leaders of countries in the Group of Seven (G-7) nations currently meeting in France said on Sunday that they were preparing to help Brazil battle fires burning across the Amazon region and



WASTELAND Vast swathes of the Amazon jungle in Porto Velho, Brazil, have been laid to waste by weeks of wildfires. —REUTERS

repair the damage as tens of thousands of soldiers got ready to join the fight against blazes that had caused global alarm.

French President Emmanuel Macron said that the summit lead-

ers were nearing an agreement on how to support Brazil and said it would involve both technical and financial mechanisms "so that we can help them in the most effective way possible."



The lung of our whole Earth is affected, and so we must find common solutions.

Angela Merkel
German Chancellor

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said her country and others would talk with Brazil about reforestation in the Amazon once fires there had been extinguished.

"Of course [this is] Brazilian territory, but we have a question here of the rain forests that is really a global question," she said. "The lung of our whole Earth is affected, and so we must find common solutions."

Macron on Sunday said the G-7 was nearing a deal to provide "technical and financial help" to countries affected by the Amazon fires.

Pope's appeal for prayers

Pope Francis also added his voice to the chorus of concern over the fires in Brazil, which borders his homeland of Ar-

gentina, and urged people to pray so that "they are controlled as quickly as possible."

The Pontiff, addressing the public in St. Peter's Square on Sunday, said "let us pray so that, with the efforts of all, they are controlled as quickly as possible."

The Earth Alliance, a new environmental foundation backed by Leonardo DiCaprio, is pledging \$5 million in aid to the Amazon, which has been swept by wildfires.

=Nearly 80,000 fires have been registered across Brazil through Aug. 24, the highest since at least 2013, according to space research agency Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (National Institute for Space Research). —REPORTS FROM REUTERS AND AP



G7 pledges \$22M for Amazon

BIARRITZ, France: The G7 countries have agreed to release 20 million euros (\$22 million) for the Amazon, most of which will be used to send firefighting aircraft, a source in the French presidency said.

The club — comprising Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — has also agreed to support a medium-term reforestation plan, which will be unveiled at the United Nations in September, a presidential aide said.

On the final day of the G7 summit, the agenda included discussions of the fires destroying chunks of the Amazon, a scenario that European leaders have described as an assault on the so-called green lungs of the world.

Trump has been less vocal on the issue.

He also stands out from the rest of the G7 leaders in his budding friendship with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a former army officer who has given freer rein to industrial farmers and loggers,

► **AmazonA2**

■ AMAZON FROM A1

G7 pledges

who have made the country an agribusiness power — at a huge cost to the environment.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had pledged earlier Monday £10 million (\$12.3 million) to help Amazon reforestation efforts, including in areas hit by the fires.

French President Emmanuel Macron has threatened to block an extensive new trade deal between the European Union (EU) and Latin America unless Bolsonaro takes more serious steps to combat global warming.

The fires across the world's largest rainforest, which experts have blamed on rampant deforestation, have triggered a global outcry — with European nations leading the charge against Bolsonaro, who has made no secret of his skepticism about climate change.

The row has seen Brazilian politicians — including Bolsonaro's son Eduardo — take potshots at Macron, with Education Minister Abraham Weintraub calling him

“an opportunist idiot” and “a president without character” in a flurry of tweets Sunday.

Eduardo, who is tipped to be the next ambassador to Washington, on Friday retweeted a video showing violent yellow-vest protests in France headlined “Macron is an idiot,” calling it “a message” to the French leader.

Macron has accused Bolsonaro of lying about a June pledge to fight global warming and threatened to block efforts to seal a major trade deal between the EU and South America's Mercosur nations over the Amazon crisis.

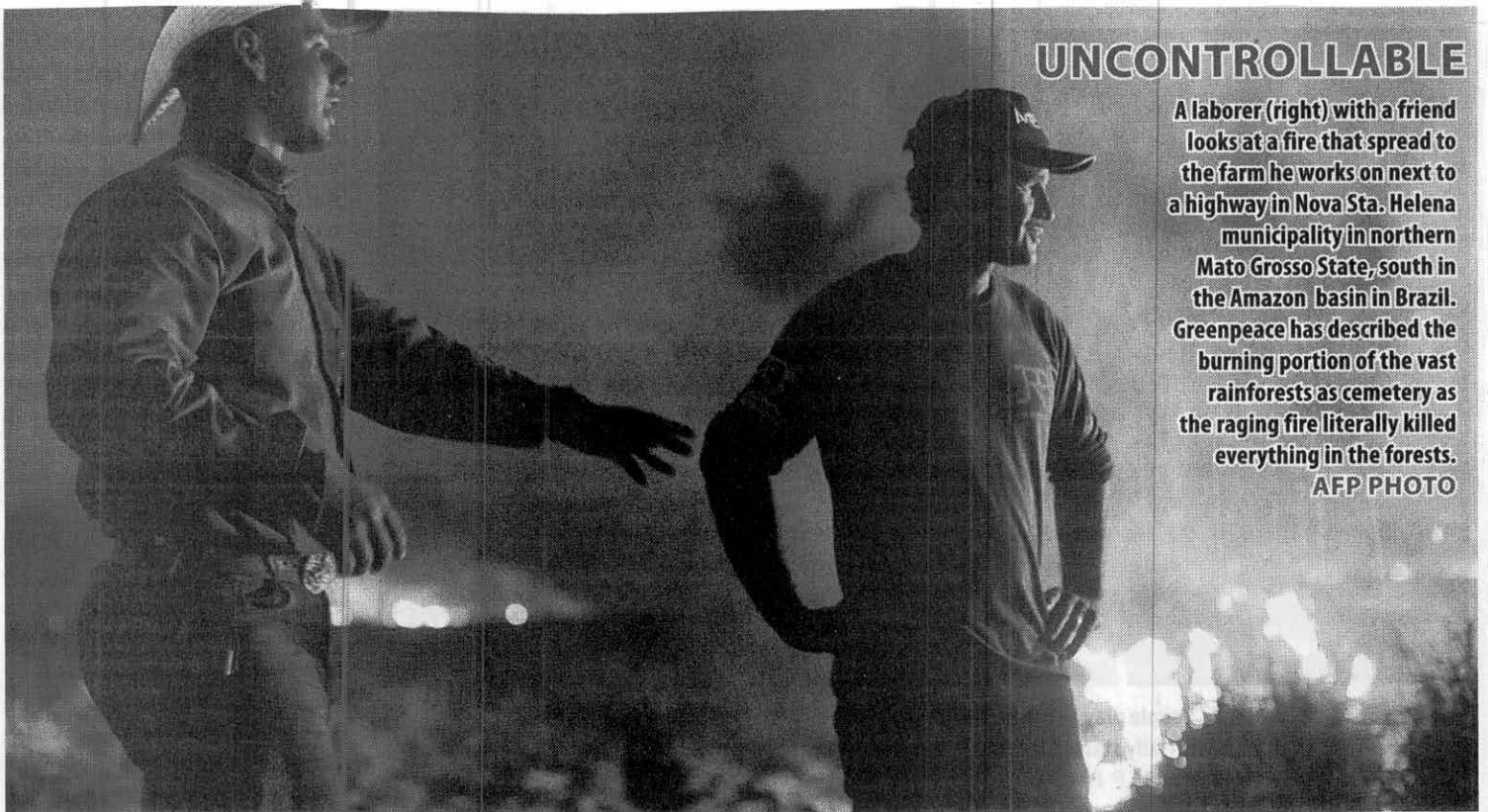
Ties between Brazil and France have plunged since Bolsonaro's election. Last month, the Brazilian leader snubbed France's top diplomat by canceling their meeting and getting a haircut instead, which he broadcast live on Facebook.

Jean-Yves Le Drian had angered Bolsonaro by meeting with nonprofits, which have been critical of the South American leader.

Last week, Bolsonaro accused nonprofit organizations of deliberately starting the fires after their funding was cut.

AFP

'Amazon now like a cemetery'



UNCONTROLLABLE

A laborer (right) with a friend looks at a fire that spread to the farm he works on next to a highway in Nova Sta. Helena municipality in northern Mato Grosso State, south in the Amazon basin in Brazil. Greenpeace has described the burning portion of the vast rainforests as cemetery as the raging fire literally killed everything in the forests.

AFP PHOTO

PORTO Velho, Brazil: "This is almost a cemetery. Because all you can see is death." This is how nongovernment group, Greenpeace, described the burning portion of the sprawling Amazon rainforest as they accompanied personalities in flying above this province situated 460 kilometers north of Sao Paulo, Brazil's capital.

"This is almost a cemetery. Because all you can see is death," Rosanna Villar of Greenpeace said.

Rosanna Villar, an official of Greenpeace warned that it's only a matter of days before the fire reach the border with Peru and Bolivia, which are both over 300 kilometers away from the fire flashpoint that started over two weeks ago.

The smoke is so thick, at times the Cessna airplane had to climb to stay out of it. At times your eyes burn and you close the air

vents to keep the cabin habitable. Sometimes it is so bad, it is hard to see how bad it actually is on the ground below.

Flying above the Amazon's worst afflicted state, Rondonia, is exhausting mostly because of the endless scale of the devastation.

At first, smoke disguised the constant stream of torched fields, and copses; of winding roads that weaved into nothing but ash. Be-



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low, the orange specks of a tiny fire might still rage, but much of the land appeared a mausoleum of the forest that once graced it.

"This is not just a forest that is burning," Villar added.

Blackened tree trunks lay smoldering on the charred ground as thick smoke chokes the Amazon rainforest in Brazil, a scene of devastation that is being repeated across the "lungs of the planet."

In the northwestern state of Rondonia one of the hardest hit areas by the worst fires in years people are living under a blanket of smoke that has enveloped the remote region.

"I've lived here for 20 years and I've seen a lot of fires, but this smoke in recent days, I've never seen anything like that before," Welis da Claiana, 25, told Agence France-Presse (AFP) in the capital Porto Velho.

"The smoke has affected 100 percent of our daily lives. We wake up tired from breathing the smoke."

Da Claiana says the fires in recent days had even threatened the car hire company where she works and forced the cancellation of flights at the local airport.

"Visibility was horrible, no one could do anything," she

said, blaming "big farmers" for the blazes.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday pledged £10 million (\$12.3 million) to help restore the Amazon rainforest, which has been ravaged by fires, sparking a wave of global concern.

The money would be made available immediately to help restore the habitat, including areas that had been hit by the fires, the British government said in a statement released at the G7 summit in the French resort of Biarritz.

The pledge came after French President Emmanuel Macron, who is hosting the summit, said Sunday (Monday in Manila) that world leaders had agreed to help the countries affected by the wildfires as soon as possible.

"In a week where we have all watched, horrified, as the Amazon rainforest burns before our eyes, we cannot escape the reality of the damage we are inflicting on the natural world," Johnson said in a statement.

Although about 60 percent of the Amazon is in Brazil, the vast forest also takes in parts Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

AP/AFP



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Amazon forest fires are important to us

THE Amazon rainforest is so far from us, on the opposite side of the planet, separated from us on one side by the Pacific Ocean and on the other side by the Asian and African continents and the Atlantic Ocean, that we are likely to ignore it. But what is happening there today – raging forest fires – may well affect the entire world, including us in our islands.

Fires have been raging fiercely these last eight months all over the Amazon rainforest, mostly in Brazil but also in Paraguay and Bolivia. Satellite images show smoke from the forest fires racing across the entire South American continent. The number of wildfires this year is said to be 84 percent greater than last year.

On the eve of the summit of Group of 7 (G7) nations in France this weekend, French President Emmanuel Macron called the Amazon forest fires an international crisis and urged their inclusion in the G7 agenda. Germany and Norway had earlier cited Brazil's apparent lack of commitment to fight deforestation and decided to withhold \$60 million they had earmarked for Brazilian forest sustainability projects.

Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro has fired back at all critics, accusing Macron of seeking political gains. His chief of staff accused the European countries of exaggerating Brazil's environmental problems. But, yielding somewhat to the growing world concern, Bolsonaro last Friday authorized the deployment of the country's armed forces to help fight the fires.

The world's concern over the Amazon fires is

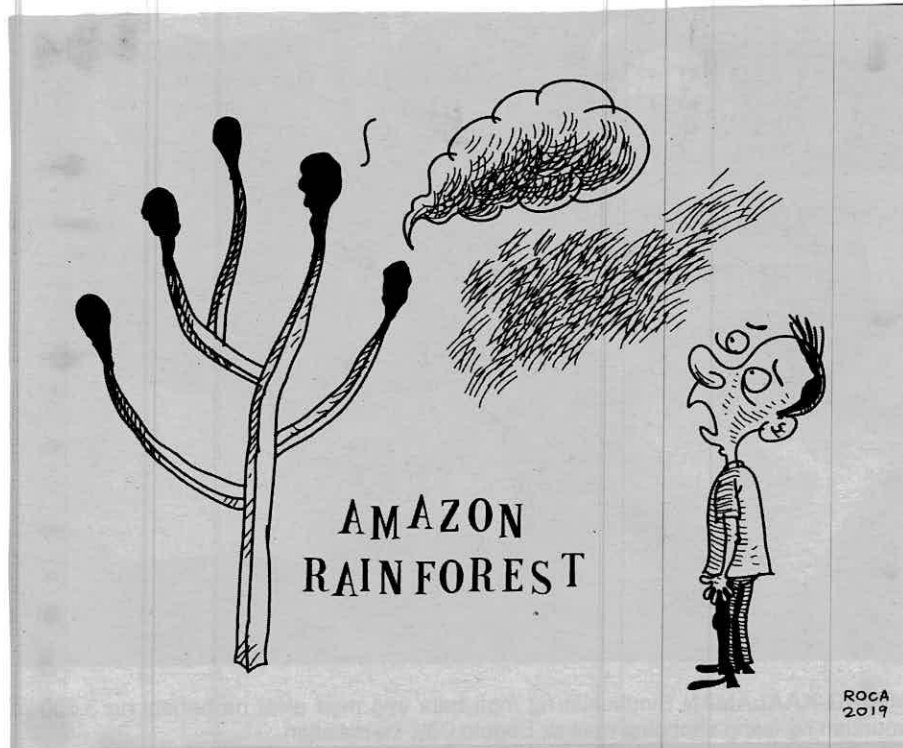
based on fears that life on the entire planet may well be affected if the fires continue unabated. The Amazon rainforest produces 20 percent of the entire world's oxygen. Its millions of trees absorb and process the carbon dioxide produced by industries around the world and convert it into oxygen.

Industrialization has boosted the carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere, causing earth's temperatures to rise. The world's nations which met in Paris in 2015 resolved to act on the problem, with each nation submitting a plan of action to help reduce the production of carbon dioxide so as to limit the rise in world temperature to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The world's icebergs in the polar regions have already begun to melt. The world's ocean levels are rising as a result, threatening low-lying islands, including some of ours in the Philippines. The heat has also produced stronger typhoons and other storms that have caused so much more destruction on our islands.

The continuing fires in the Amazon rainforest are also affecting the world's climate by reducing the oxygen the forest trees are producing. The rainforest, occupying about 40 percent of the land area of South America, is also the source of 25 percent of the world's fresh water. It is the home of more than half of the world's estimated 10 million species of plants, animals, and insects.

This is why the Amazon forest fires are so important to us. They may be on the other side of the globe, but if they continue to destroy so many trees, the rainforest – so often called the "Lungs of the World" – will no longer be able to play this life-giving role in our world today.



Mahalaga sa atin ang sunog sa Amazon

NAPAKALAYO sa atin ng Amazon rainforest, nasa kabilang bahagi ito ng mundo, na inihihwalay sa atin ng Karagatang Pasipiko at sa kabilang bahagi ng mga kontinente ng Asya at Africa at ng Karagatang Atlantic, na maaari natin itong balewalain. Ngunit sa nangyayari ngayon – ang sumisiklab na sunog sa kagubatan – maari itong makaapekto sa buong mundo, kabilang dito sa ating bansa.

Walong buwan nang nananalasa ang sunog sa iba't ibang bahagi ng Amazon rainforest, malaking bahagi sa Brazil ngunit may bahagi rin sa Paraguay at Bolivia. Ipinapakita ng mga imahе mula sa satellite ang mga usok na nagmumula sa forest fire na patuloy na lumalamon sa bahagi ng buong kontinente ng South America. Sinasabing ang bilang ngayon ng mga naitalang wildfire sa lugar ay 84 porsiyentong mas malala kumpara noong nakaraang taon.

Sa gabi ng idinadaos na summit ng Group of 7 (G7) na mga bansa sa France nitong nakaraang Linggo, tinawag ni French President Emmanuel Macron na isang 'international crisis' ang nagaganap na sunog sa Amazon at hinikayat na maisama ito sa agenda ng G7. Una nang nabanggit ng Germany at Norway ang tila kawalan ng aksiyon ng Brazil para labanan ang deforestation at nagdesisyong ipagpaliban muna ang \$60 milyong na ilalaan sana para sa proyektong magpapanatili ng kagubatan sa Brazil.

Tinugon ni Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro ang kanyang mga kritiko, at inakusahan si Macron ng pamumulitika. Inakusahan naman ng kanyang Chief of Staff ang mga bansa sa Europa na pinalalaki umano ang problema ng Brazil sa kalikasan. Ngunit, tila tugon sa lumalagong pangamba ng mundo, ipinag-utos nitong Biyernes ni Bolsonaro ang pagpapadala ng militar ng kanyang bansa upang tumulong sa pag-aapula ng sunog.

Ang pangamba ng mundo sa sunog sa Amazon ay base sa takot na maapektuhan nito ang buhay sa mundo kung magpapatuloy ito. Inilalabas ng Amazon rainforest ang 20 porsiyento ng kabuuang oxygen sa mundo. Ang milyon-milyon nitong mga puno ay may kakayahang tumanggap at magproseso ng carbon dioxide na inilalabas ng mga industrita sa mundo at isinasalin upang maging oxygen.

Pinalalala ng industriyalisasyon ang carbon dioxide sa mundo, na nagdudulot ng pagtaas ng temperatura ng daigdig. Sinubukang resolbahin ang suliraning ito, ng mga bansa na nagpulong sa Paris noong 2015, kung saan bawat bansa ay nagsumite ng planong aksiyon upang makatulong na mabawasan ang produksiyon ng carbon dioxide na magdudulot ng pagpigil sa pagtaas ng temperatura ng daigdig na mas mababa sa 1.5 degree Celsius.

Nagsimula na ring matunaw ang malalaking tipak ng yelo sa bahagi ng polar region. Na bilang resulta ay nagpapataas ng lebel ng karagatan, nagbibigay banta sa mga mabababang isla, kabilang ang ilan sa Pilipinas. Ang init din nito ay lumilikha ng mas malalakas na mga bagyo na nagdudulot ng higit na pinsala sa ating mga isla.

Ang nagpapatuloy na sunog sa Amazon ay nakaaapekto rin sa klima ng mundo sa pamamagitan ng pagbawas ng oxygen na nailalabas ng mga puno sa kagubatan. Ang rainforest, na sumasakop sa 40 porsiyento ng kabuuang lupain ng South America, ay pinagmumulan din ng 25 porsiyento ng fresh water sa mundo. Tahanan din ito ng higit kalahati ng tinatayang 10 milyong uri ng halaman, hayop at insekto sa mundo.

Ito ang dahilan kung bakit mahalaga sa atin ang nagaganap na sunog sa Amazon. Maaaring nasa kabilang panig ito ng daigdig, ngunit kung magpapatuloy ito sa pagsira ng maraming puno, ang rainforest – na kalimitang tinatawag na "Lungs of the World" – ay hindi na makagagampan sa tungkulin nito na magbigay-buhay sa ating mundo.



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WILDFIRE Makapal na usok ang bumalot sa Candeias do Jamari, sa Amazon basin, Brazil, nitong Sabado. Ginamitan na ito ng dalawang C-130 na eroplano upang maapula ang sunog nasabing kagubatan.



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SINO ang may sabing ligtas ang mag-vaping o manigarilyo ng e-cigarette?

Ang vaping ang ipinapalit sa paninigarilyo na tabako ang gamit.

Kasama ang nicotine sa mga palaman ng e-cigarette at ito ang nakaaadik sa paninigarilyo ngunit wala umanong tar na solidong by-product ng tabako.

Ang tar ang nakikitang kulay dilaw na kumakapit sa mga kuko at itim sa ngipin at nagiging dahilan ng paggaspang ng daluyan ng hininga ng tao at kung nakapapasok ito sa baga, pinagmumulan din ng lung cancer.

NABABAHALA

Nababahala ang mga awtoridad sa Amerika sa paggamit ng milyones na Kano ng vaping.

Natutuklasan, halimbawa, na may namatay na at nasa 200 na ang naospital dahil sa vaping.

Sabi ng US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, taga-Illinois ang namatay samantalang mula sa 22 estado ng Amerika ang mga nagkakasakit na sira na ang mga baga.

Nagpaospital ang mga gumagamit ng e-cigarette makaraang makaranas ng labis na pagsusuka, pagtatae at panghihina ng katawan.

Ang higit na nababahala umano, maaaring mas marami ang mga kasong ganito bagama't hindi pa natutuklasan dahil ngayon lang lumilitaw ang problema.

LIGTAS DAW

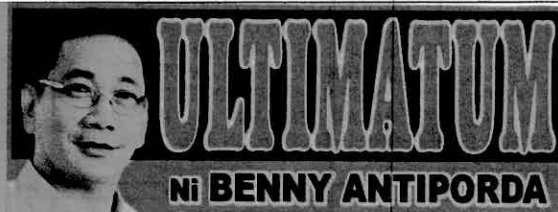
Sabi ng isang asosasyon ng mga gumagamit ng e-cigarette, ligtas lahat umano ang mga kemikal na gamit para rito.

Hindi umano katulad ng e-cigarette ang sigarilyo na kalahati ng gumagamit ang namamatay kung tuloy-tuloy ang kanilang paninigarilyo.

Kaya umano nagiging delikado, mga Bro, eh, maaaring may mga inihahalo ang iba gaya ng marijuana at iba pang droga.

Sumasang-ayon naman ang ilang awtoridad sa katwiran ng nasabing asosasyon pero may pasubali silang dapat umanong isalang talaga sa pagsusuri ang epekto ng vaping.

Bagong sistema umano ang vaping at



NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

1 PATAY, 200 SIRA ANG BAGA SA VAPING

wala pa umanong nakaalam talaga ang epekto nito.

Pero nagbababala na ang mga awtoridad na maituturing nang "dangerous" ang vaping batay sa mga kaso ng mga naospital at namatay.

BAKIT

TINATALAKAY?

Tinatalakay natin ang vaping, mga Bro, dahil lumalabas na marami nang Pinoy ang gumagamit nito.

Napakarami na ngang nagtatayo ng vaping center.

Kasama sa mga naglalagay ng karatula na may tatak na Vaping Center ang mga computer shop at gaming center na dinarayo ng mga kabataan kahit saang mauunlad na bayan at lungsod sa mahal kong Pinas.

Ilan nang computer shop na gaming center din ang ating pinasok upang obserbahan ang vaping at umuusok talaga sa loob ng computer shop.

Pinapayagan ang vaping sa loob ng computer dahil hindi ito ipinagbabawal ng ating gobyerno katulad ng ginagawa sa paninigarilyo ng tabako.

MARIJUANA, COCAINE, SHABU CENTER

Wais ang mga drug dealer, mga Bro.

Lahit kanilang gagawin upang mabenta ang kanilang droga na marijuana, cocaine, shabu at iba pa.

At maaaring ginagamit ng mga ito ang mga vaping center gaya ng mga computer shop at gaming center na dinarayo ng mga kabataan.

Mula rito, mungkahi natin sa mga awtoridad na pag-aralan nila nang husto ang vaping sa mga lugar na ito.

Anong malay natin na ang mga paraphernalia sa vaping ay mga droga pala ang laman o may halong droga ang palaman nito?

Mismo ang asosasyon ng vaping sa Amerika ang nagsasabing posibleng pinalalamnan o hinahayaan ng "dangerous drugs" ang mga para-

phernalia sa vaping kaya nasisira ang baga ng mga nagpaospital at namatay.

LIGAL NA LIGAL

Dahil ligal ang mga computer shop at gaming center, ligal na ligal din ang pagdodroga ng mga adik at tulak sa mga ito.

Sinasamantala ng mga drug dealer ang pagkakaroon ng ligal na paraan ng pagbebenta at pagpapagamit ng mga droga.

Hindi imposibleng mangyari ito.

Kung nagagawa ng mga drug dealer na isingit ang droga sa mga itinuturing na iligal na palaro gaya ng mga video-karera, aba, walang harang sa kanila na gamitin ang mga vaping center para sa pagbebenta at pagpapagamit ng droga.

HINDI SAPAT

Sa kabuuan, mga Bro, hindi sapat na buwisan ang mga bentang e-cigarette.

Hindi rin sapat na kontrolin ang pagbebenta nito sa mga menor-de-edad o pagbawalan ang mga estudyante na pumasok sa mga computer shop na ginagawang gaming center sa oras ng pasok sa eskwelahan.

Dapat na gumawa ang mga awtoridad ng test o pagsusuri sa mga nagbi-vape na nakikita nila kahit saan.

Anong malay natin na cover lang ng iligal na droga ang vaping?

Dapat na ring sumabay ang mga awtoridad sa mga awtoridad na kaho sa pag-aaral sa epekto ng vaping.

Baka isang araw ay matagpuan na lang natin ang maraming Pinoy na sira na rin ang mga baga tulad ng nangyayari sa mga Kano.

Mahirap isiping magiging pasanin ng lahat, mga pamilya at pamahalaan, ang lahat ng magkakasakit at namatay dahil sa vaping.

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