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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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Cimatu calls for support to save the Philippine eagle

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu urged Filipinos to join global efforts to prevent the critically endangered Philippine eagle from becoming extinct.

"As an endemic species, the Philippine eagle already serves as a global heritage that requires concerted efforts of the international community for conservation," Cimatu said as the nation celebrates Philippine Eagle Week (PEW) on June 4-10.

A pair of Philippine eagles will be loaned to the Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) as a starting point for bringing the efforts to save the iconic raptor to a global scale.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and WRS have signed a 10-year renewable agreement to bring Philippine eagles Geothermica and Sambisig to leave for Singapore on June 4.

"Sending Geothermica and Sambisig to Singapore is a historical milestone and a tangible indication that the international community is needed in the protection and conservation of the Philippine eagle, the country's bird and crown jewel of biodiversity," Cimatu said.

The two raptors will be staying at Jurong Bird Park, the largest bird park in Asia that is home to close to 3,500 birds across 400 species, of which 20 percent is threatened.

"With millions of tourists flocking at the Jurong Bird Park, where our Philippine eagles will live, we are bringing them closer to the international community in the hopes of encouraging international attention and support for their conservation," Cimatu pointed out.

PEW is observed from June 4 to 10 of every year by virtue of Proclamation No. 79 issued in 1999.

The declaration hopes to promote awareness about the importance of the Philippine eagle as a

biological indicator of the forest ecosystem, a national symbol and a unique heritage.

The theme for this year's PEW celebration is "The Philippine Eagle: A National Symbol, A Global Treasure."

"Let this year's PEW celebration instill in the minds of Filipinos the significance of our national bird and the desire of our nation to rise and soar like this national treasure," Cimatu said.

Known as the largest of the extant eagles in the world in terms of length and wing surface, the Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) is listed as a "critically endangered" raptor in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List and the country's National List of Threatened Species under DENR Administrative Order 2004-15.

Wild population of the species throughout the archipelago remains precarious with an estimated number of at least 340 pairs. Hunting and loss of forest habitat remain the primary threats to its survival.



Philippine Eagle iligtas sa pagkaubos

Nanawagan si Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu sa publiko na iligtas ang Philippine Eagle na isang national treasure, mula sa pagkaubos nito.

Ang panawagan ng kalihim ay kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng Philippine Eagle Week sa Hunyo 4-10, na ginagawa kada taon batay sa Proclamation No. 79 na inisyu noong 1999.

Layunin nito na makapagbigay ng tamang kaalaman at pagpapahalaga sa Philippine Eagle bilang "biological indicator" ng forest ecosystem na isang simbolo ng pamana ng bansa.

Inihayag din ni Cimatu na ang desisyon ng bansa na ipadala sa Singapore ang dalawang Philippine Eagle na pinangalanang Geothermica at Sambisig ay isang tamang pagsisimula upang masagip ang lahi nito.
(Dolly Cabreza)



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Global support to save PH Eagle urged

By Cory Martinez



"THERE should be a concerted global effort to prevent the critically endangered Philippine eagle -- a national treasure symbolizing the country's identity -- from becoming extinct."

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu said this ahead of the country's celebration of the Philippine Eagle Week (PEW) starting tomorrow until June 10.

"As an endemic species, the Philippine eagle already serves as a global heritage that requires concerted efforts of the international community for conservation," Cimatu stressed.

Cimatu said the country's decision to loan a pair of Philippine eagle to Wildlife Reserves Singapore

(WRS) makes a good starting point for bringing the efforts to save the iconic raptor to a global scale.

Barely two weeks after the historic wildlife loan agreement was signed between the DENR and WRS, Philippine eagles Geothermica and Sambisig are scheduled to leave for Singapore tomorrow, June 4.

"Sending Geothermica and Sambisig to Singapore is a historical milestone and a tangible indication that the international community is needed in the protection and conservation of the Philippine eagle, the country's national bird and crown jewel of biodiversity," Cimatu said.

The two raptors will be staying at Jurong Bird Park, the largest bird park in

Asia that is home to close to 3,500 birds across 400 species, of which 20 percent is threatened.

"With millions of tourists flocking at the Jurong Bird Park, where our Philippine eagles will live, we are bringing them closer to the international community in the hopes of encouraging international attention and support for their conservation," Cimatu added.

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Environment challenge

WORLD Environment Day is celebrated every June 5, and the Philippines has extended this to the observance of Environment Month every June through Presidential Proclamation No. 237 signed in 1998. This year, with the theme #BeatAir-Pollution, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has lined up various activities, including the "Mask Challenge" on Twitter wherein it calls on the public to share what action they will take — and convince others to do the same — to help achieve cleaner air.





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PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

Manila Bay cleanup drive gets more support

THE government's effort to rehabilitate Manila Bay and its tributaries has received another much-needed boost with Metro Pacific Investments Corp.'s commitment to join the cleanup drive.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu and MPIC president and CEO Jose Ma. Lim forged a five-year partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to clean up the filthiest creeks that flow in Pasig River and ultimately to Manila Bay.

The DENR's Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body program identified 20 dirtiest esteros that drain into Pasig River: Esteros de Vitas, San Lazaro, Kabulusan, Magdalena, Binondo, Dela Reina, Sampaloc, San Sebastian, San Miguel, Valencia, Uli-uli, Paco, Pandacan, Tanque, Baleta, Provisor, Concordia, Sunog Apog, San Antonio Abad and Quiapo.

According to Cimatu, the DENR-MPIC collaboration is a continuation of the battle cry for Pasig River: "rehabilitating a river, restoring life and reviving the pride."

For his part, Lim assured that the MPIC—through its subsidiary Maynilad Water Services Inc.—"remains fully committed to protecting the environment."

Joel dela Torre



Pasig River estero clean-up: 96% budget used for less than 30% completion

BY PETER TABINGO

THE Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) utilized P107.568 million or 96 percent of the P111.078 million funding for the clearing of six waterways in Metro Manila in 2018 but reported low accomplishments ranging from only 1 to 27.65 percent.

This was revealed in the 2018 audit report on the agency released by the Commission on Audit last May 31.

The waterway projects included the P52.585 million rehabilitation and development of San Juan River with a utilization of P51.27 million but an accomplishment report of only 27.65 percent; a similar project for Estero de Magdalena with a P17.49 million budget and utilization of P16.89 million or 96.57

percent against an accomplishment of just 1 percent; the P12.9 million project for Estero de Kabulusan with fund usage of 99.04 percent or P12.78 million; the P11.237 million project for Estero de Pandacan 2 wherein 97.34 percent or P10.94 million of the budget used against a delivery rate of just 26.51 percent; the P8.514 million Estero de la Reina project with 97.43 percent or P8.296 million budget utilization against a 20.57 accomplishment; and the Estero de Valencia phase 3 project worth P8.349 million with 88.6 percent or P7.397 million of the budget obligated against an accomplishment of 26.51 percent.

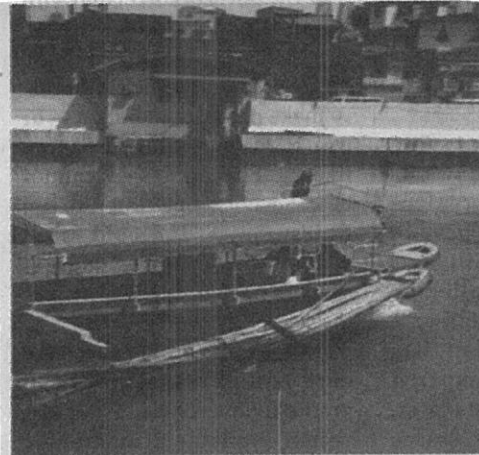
Auditors said the accomplishments were "notably low", pinning the blame on the PRRC management for failing to anticipate problems

including resistance by local officials.

"The low accomplishment was brought about by prolonged resistance of the newly elected barangay chairman in the project for Estero de la Reina and right of way issues for four other esteros which should have been addressed first," the COA said.

It added the PRRC should not have awarded contracts until it has resolved right-of-way issues, as provided under section 17.6 of RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Law.

The report said the PRRC management has agreed to COA recommendations that infrastructure projects should strictly observe the provisions on detailed engineering under RA 9184 and that steps should be taken to fast-track implementation of the estero clean-up projects.



BW FILE PHOTO

PEOPLE ride a motorized ferry along a part of Pasig River to cross the river between the cities of Mandaluyong and Makati. November 20, 2011.

Pasig River projects incomplete despite considerable fund use

PROJECTS last year by the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) were not completed, despite the considerable use of their funds, according to the Commission on Audit (CoA).

CoA said PRRC was able to utilize P107,568,198.93 of its P111,078,000 appropriation as approved by the Department of Budget and Management for six rehabilitation and development projects.

These projects cover the San Juan River, Estero de Magdalena, Estero de Kabulusan, Estero de Valencia, Estero de Pandacan, and Estero de la Reina.

Of the San Juan River project, P51,269,661.02 was spent, but the project remains only 27.65% complete, CoA said in its report, which also cited "Right-of-way issues and unavailability of cleared easements."

Estero de Magdalena in Manila posted 1% accomplishment despite the P16,889,551.53 spent on it.

The Estero de la Reina project posted 20.57% accomplishment, according to CoA's report, which also cited "Prolonged resistance of the newly elected Barangay Chairman in the implementation of the project."

Rehabilitation and development of the Estero de Valencia Phase 3 and Estero de Pandacan Phase 2 were reported as 20.12% and 26.51% accomplished, respectively.

The state auditors recommended that PRRC fast-track those projects. — **Vince Angelo C. Ferreras**



SKETCHES

ANA MARIE PAMINTUAN

River rehab

GLASGOW – From my hotel room in this Scottish city, I have a splendid view of the Clyde Arc Bridge spanning the River Clyde.

The water is impressively clean, with greenery lining the banks. I've been told that there are ducks and swans in some areas of the river. Salmon has been spotted in recent years, after barriers were removed along some 100 kilometers of the 176-km river to allow the entry of migratory fish.

Like many of the rivers in Europe, however, the Clyde had to be revived from near-death from pollution and heavy siltation.

The river had contributed to the economic growth of the city. Locals say that "Glasgow made the Clyde, and the Clyde made Glasgow."

This city was once a center for shipping and industrialization, with all the pollution that these engendered. Photos show Glasgow during that era, with smoke and soot wafting from factories. When the rains came, the pollution went back to the land and the river, turning much of the landscape grimy. Sewage and factory effluent were discharged untreated into the river. The heavily silted river was dredged regularly to allow bigger commercial ships including those from other countries to enter, transporting the city's top trading commodities, tobacco and sugar. Dikes and canals were built to make the river deeper.

The large ships were a boon to the local economy but aggravated the pollution. Because of the importance of the river to the industrialized capability of Scotland, Glasgow was also targeted for heavy bombardment during the First and Second World Wars.

Until the 1960s, the riverfront still housed polluting factories, coal-fired power plants, railway stations and tenements with poor sanitation.

Like other advanced economies in post-industrialization Europe, however, Glasgow residents sick of the pollution decided to do something about the river waste and stench.

This year, Glasgow was picked as Scotland's third greenest city after the capital Edinburgh and Aberdeen (cleanest air), by commercial waste and recycling service First Mile. Glasgow was cited particularly for the zeal of its residents in eschewing single-use plastics.

For someone like me, whose office is just a stone's throw from polluted Pasig River, the Clyde is a dream.



In the past two decades, the Pasig itself has undergone an effective cleanup. Last October, the Pasig rehabilitation program won the first Asia RiverPrize Award, beating China's Yangtze. The award, given by the International River Foundation, was conferred during ceremonies held in Sydney, Australia.

The award qualifies the Pasig to compete for State 2 of the Thiess International RiverPrize this year. It might lose. In recent weeks, driving to the Cignal TV / One News studio in Mandaluyong for my co-hosting of "The Chiefs" show, I have been dismayed by the sight of garbage and uncollected water lilies in the river near Guadalupe bridge in Makati.

It's a disappointing backsliding. The sight of this stretch of the river has always delighted me. Until some weeks ago, people were fishing along the riverbanks and children were diving and swimming, although I doubt if the water is clean enough for that. The river rehabilitation has been such a success that I've been urging friends to try the pleasant riverboat ride from the westernmost station in Intramuros, Manila to the opposite end in Marikina.

Now the pollution is back, possibly due to the start of the construction of the Santa Monica-Lawton Bridge – Phase One of the BGC-Ortigas Link Road Project. There are always barges around the area, which could be aggravating the pollution. Several other bridges are being built across the Pasig, and it will take years to complete them. Will the river return to its heavily polluted condition during that period?

Incoming Manila Mayor Isko Moreno told The Chiefs in a recent interview that he would clear the city's riverbanks of informal settlements and develop green riverfront enclaves in selected areas, including the former oil depot in Pandacan.

River rehabilitation, however, must be undertaken together by all the local government units in Metro Manila, including those with no areas facing the river but with creeks and canals or *esteros* that wash into the Pasig.

Everyone must be on board in any river rehabilitation, and the effort must be sustained.

* * *

Even the River Clyde is not clean enough for Glasgow residents. The Scotland Environment Protection Agency says Clyde's water quality has improved from "bad" to "moderate," although a few spots can be described as "excellent."

Scotland, after all, was voted this year by readers of the influential travel guide Rough Guide as the most beautiful country in the world, beating Canada, New Zealand and Italy. An environmental charity called Keep Scotland Beautiful launched last March the "Upstream Battle" to rid the River Clyde of litter. This followed last year's anti-plastic trash cleanup campaign.

Upstream Battle is part of the continuing development of the riverside as an area for recreation, business and sustainable living.

River rehabilitation, as we know, can be costly. Scotland has earmarked 600 million pounds sterling (about P40 billion) from 2010 to 2021 for wastewater treatment and sewerage systems alone along the Clyde. Additional funds are spent for the periodic litter cleanup.

The Philippines may have to do it in Pasig and other major urban waterways on a tighter budget. But the success of the Pasig rehabilitation has shown that reviving a heavily polluted river is possible.

As long as the campaign is sustained, as Glasgow is doing, it can be done.



Despite risks, schools open in danger zones

Landslide-hit community in Benguet ready for students; private partners support education programs in remote areas in Luzon, Mindanao

By the Inquirer Bureaus
@InqNational

Paint has failed to cover the cracks on the classroom walls of Ucab Elementary School in Itogon town, Benguet province, that has been declared a "critical danger zone" by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

The school was found susceptible to landslides and ground shaking when triggered by earthquake or heavy downpour, MGB officials warned.

Despite the risk, teachers have already made all the necessary preparations to make the classrooms functional as they welcome back students on Monday.

"Fear is there but we have been assured that as long as the cracks are not on the beams and posts, it is still safe," Josephine Palitayan, who has been teaching in the school for 28 years, told the Inquirer.

Based on MGB's assessment in October last year, the other schools in critical danger zones were Ampucao National High School, Ampucao Elementary School and Manganese Elementary School at Barangay Ampucao; Goldfield Elementary School at Barangay Poblacion; and Loacan National High School, Loacan Elementary School and Luneta Elementary School at Barangay Loacan.

The assessment was made after landslides triggered by Typhoon "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut) killed 89 people in Itogon.

Among those killed were two pupils of Ucab Elementary School who were buried when a massive landslide swept a miners' bunkhouse and several shanties half a kilometer from the school.

Nerissa Barbosa, disaster risk reduction and management coordinator of the Department of Education (DepEd) in Benguet, said no relocation sites for these schools had been



CLEANUP Pupils of Tejero Elementary School in Cebu City join their parents and teachers in cleaning and preparing classrooms for Monday's school opening. —JUNJIE MENDOZA

identified so far.

She said school principals were permitted to suspend classes during heavy downpour while two-shift classes could be held in safer buildings.

In Baguio City, the Department of Trade and Industry has partnered with a local department store to give discounts for school supplies as classes begin.

High-tech classrooms

In Ilocos Norte province, at least two state-of-the-art classrooms equipped with high-tech learning gadgets will greet students in Burgos town.

The P4-million classrooms are found in Burgos Agro-Industrial School and Burgos Central Elementary School. They are equipped with computer kiosks and personal computer desktops, 50 tablets, robotic kits, 10 units of mini drones, interactive projectors, a document camera and Wi-Fi connections.

In Dagupan City, teachers will engage their students in nontraditional teaching modules as schools there follow the so-called "Happy Schools Movement" prescribed by the DepEd in Ilocos region.

Venus Maria Estonilo, officer in charge of the curriculum, said the movement was initiated by Dr. Malcolm Garma, DepEd director in Ilocos region, with each school division tasked to come up with its own teaching strategies. These strategies include cooperative learning, storytelling and play-based learning.

In Bataan province, the SM Prime Foundation on Friday turned over a two-story building with four classrooms to Balanga Elementary School at Barangay Talisay in Balanga City.

Free haircut

In Laguna province, about 200 public school children in Los Baños town got their hair cut for free in time for Monday's school opening.

day's school opening.

Janos Lapiz, Barangay Batong Malake head, said they had been offering free haircut to children for the last five years. "We took the barbers to the communities so people won't have to go to the village hall anymore," he said.

Lapiz said the program had been replicated in the villages of San Antonio, Malinta, Bayog and Bambang in Los Baños.

Zero fee

In a remote village at the border of Davao City and Cotabato province, more than 300 school children will enjoy not only free school supplies but will also get free meals and tuition this school year.

Rowel Oyong, principal of Katipunan Elementary School (KES) at Arakan town in North Cotabato, said school bags, supplies, slippers, raincoats and hygiene kits were already provided for, thanks to the partnership of the school and Davao Eagle Club, Kan Kon Chi Development Corp. and village officials who donated these materials to the children.

The school has implemented a zero collection of school fees and other contributions from parents throughout the school year. Even the school identification cards are given by the school to the pupils for free, complete with the pupils' pictures, said Oyong.

Since 2016, KES has been implementing the adopt-a-child program where a sponsor supports a pupil until Grade 6.

To ensure that pupils will not drop out of school, KES provides supplemental feeding especially among malnourished pupils and those who are at risk of leaving due to food insufficiency. —REPORTS FROM KARLSTON

LAPNITEN, KIMBERLIE QUITASOL, YOLANDA SOTELO, LEILANIE ADRIANO, GREG REFRACCION, WILLIAMOR A. MAGBANUA, DIVINA SUSON AND



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QUARRY OPS SA CAGAYAN IPINATIGIL NG PENRO

CAGAYAN - UPANG maiwasan ang sakuna, ipinag-utos ni Edwin Buedia, detailed quarry chief ng Provincial Natural Resources Environment Office (PENRO) ang pansamantalang pagpapatigil ng quarry operation sa Barangay Rapuli, Sta Ana.

Ayon kay Buedia, kaya niya umano ipina-

tigil ang nasabing quarry operation dahil sa pang-aabuso na ginagawa ng mga nagka-quarry kung saan ay lumalawak ang sinasakop ng mga ito.

Ipinaliwanag pa ni Buedia na bagaman pinayagan ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau ang mga mamamayan na magsagawa ng quarry sa designated area partikular sa may sand bar

upang maging maayos ang daloy ng tubig.

Subalit, dumulog sa tanggapan ng PENRO si Kapitan Jimmy Gamurot ng Barangay Rapuli, Santa Ana, Ca-

gayan, na ang reklamo nito ay kung saan-saan na umano kumukuha ng buhangin ang mga nagqua-quary maski hindi na nila ito sakop sa kanilang isinagawang

kontrata ng nasabing barangay.

Ayon kay Gamurot, nakumpirma nila ang sitwasyon sa lugar kung saan ay may mga kumukuha na ng buhangin sa labas ng designated area at may malapit pa sa isang tulay, na maaring ito ang maging dahilan na makaapekto at pagkasira ng tulay sa papalapit ng tag-ulan.

IRENE GONZALES



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Return to sender



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ALEJANDRO
DEL ROSARIO

LIKE a misrouted letter, 69 containers of Canadian garbage was sent to the Philippines. But unlike a misguided letter you can simply give back to the postman to return to sender, the unwanted trash delivery stayed in the country nearly five years, some of them buried in a landfill in Tarlac. The garbage consisted of human and household refuse, toxic hospital waste including used adult diapers.

Why does Canada with its vast expanse of land, much of it still uninhabited, want to dump its garbage in a small faraway country like the Philippines?

The Canadian garbage brought in from 2013 to 2014 was the subject of a heated trash talk exchange between Ottawa and Manila. It got to a point wherein President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to declare war on Canada. Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin, Jr. added an extra measure of recalling Philippine diplomats from Canada to stress our disgust with the US neighbor up north.

Why does Canada with its vast expanse of land, much of it still uninhabited, want to dump its garbage in a small faraway country like the Philippines? A clean environment-conscious country, Canada found a willing Filipino firm to accept the trash to convert some of it into recyclable material. This, it seems to us, is more the fault of our flawed laws on the

enforcement of allowing even imported and dangerous material. Importers like this Filipino firm must submit documents and seek permission to import such material. The Bureau of Customs should have also stopped and barred the containers from landing at the wharf and right there and then sent the vessel back to where it came from. It is the BOC, after all, which is the first line of defense against dangerous items from coming into the country.

But what do you expect? This is the same Customs bureau that allowed billions of pesos worth of shabu shipment to slip through.

The next question to ask is how the Filipino importer was able to get the unhealthy shipment from Canada out of the customs area. Your guess is as good as mine.

It is in instances like these when the government usually declares a lifestyle check on Customs officials. But as usual, after so much publicity about lifestyle checks, the crooks at Customs lie low for a while and then go back to business as usual to amass more wealth to buy real estate, luxury cars and maintain mistresses even more well kept than their real families.

Only in the Philippines and its benighted bureau!

A punitive policy of lengthy imprisonment is perhaps in order. The incoming elected members of the House and Senate should enact new laws to address this corruption at the Customs bureau. Senator-elect Ronald de la Rosa, a former Philippine National Police and Bureau of Corrections chief, could make this his introductory measure to make his mark.

Turn to A5



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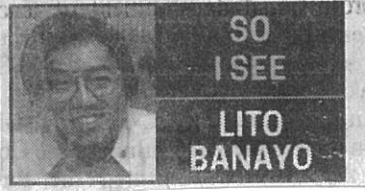
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From humble beginnings



The past week was not without some unnerving moments though, as when MECO had to intercede with the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure that the 69 containers of trash that President Duterte ordered returned to Canada, would be allowed trans-shipment in the southern port of Kaohsiung.

Because these were labelled as "hazardous wastes", and the attendant publicity drew world attention, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda

was worried about the trans-shipment through a foreign port with very strict environmental laws. So was the Canadian resident representative in Taipei.

In any case, MV Bavaria, the Liberian-registered vessel which went on a slow trip from Subic to Kaohsiung, finally docked at half past midnight Sunday, June 2, and in the process of being loaded to a bigger Maersk Line ship bound for Canada as of this writing.



Remate

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PANAHOON na ng saulian ng kandila, este, basura ng mga bansa.

Kasabay ng mahal kong Pinas ang Malaysia na nagsasauli ng mga basura na galing sa ibang bansa.

Nauna rito, ipinagbawal ng bansang China ang pagtatambak ng mga katakot-takot na basura sa kanila.

Pero wala tayong natatandaan na pagsasauli nito.

Nang walang mapagbalingan ang mga magbabasurang bansa na pawang mga mayayaman, sa labas na ng China sila nagbabasura at isinama na nila ang Pinas at Malaysia.

Ang totoo, hindi lang naman tayo ang pinagtatapanan ng basura kundi marami pang iba, kasama ang ilang bansa sa Asya at Africa.

Sa Asya, kabilang ang Indonesia, Pakistan, India at Vietnam samantalang sa Africa, kasama ang Nigeria, Ghana at iba pa.

Ang Mexico naman ang tapunan ng basura ng Amerika.

Ang pagkakaiba lang, ang Pinas at Malaysia ang matagumpay na nagpapabalik ng mga basura sa pinanggalingan nilang mga bansa.

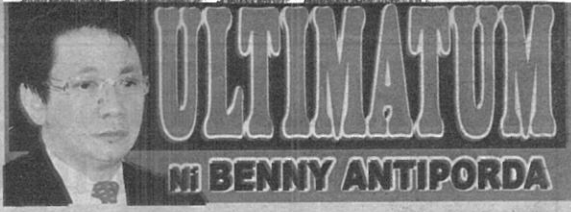
BASURANG CANADA

Itong basura na galing sa Canada at idinaong sa Port of Manila noong 2013-2014 na panahon ni ex-President Noyoy Aquino tayo nahirapan na magpapabalik.

Unang-una, basta binabalewala noong una ng Canada ang kagustuhan nating magpapabalik ng basura nila lalo't hindi kumikilos noon ang administrasyon ni Noyoy Aquino at tanging ang mga non-government organization ang pumapalag gaya ng Ecowaste Coalition.

Rason ng Canada noon, wala silang batas para sa pagpapabalik ng basura at mga pribadong kompanya ang sangkot.

Noong magsalita na ng maanghang si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, saka nagbago ang Canada sa pagsasabing pwede nang magsauli ang Pinas pero walang gagastusin ang gobyernong Canada at dapat na ang mga kompanyang



BASURA PINABABALIK NG PINAS AT MALAYSIA

san na lang ng Hunyo lahat.

Bilang protesta, pinauwi ng Pinas ang mga ambasadador at konsul natin at binawalan na rin ang pagbibiyaheng opisyal ng mga Pinoy sa Canada.

Hayun, napaaga na ang pagkuha ng Canada ng basura kaysa Hunyo at nasa karagatan na ang barkong MV Bavaria na sakay ang 69 container van ng basura.

BASURANG KOREA

Naging madaling kausap ang bansang South Korea ukol sa basurang idinating sa Mindanao naman.

Nang mabuksan ng Bureau of Customs ang ilang container van ng basura, nakarating agad sa embahada ng South Korea at doon na nagkaroon ng mga pag-uusap, kasama ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources, para sa pagpapabalik sa dayong bansa ng basura.

Nagpadala ang South Korea ng mga inspector nila at makaraang masuri nga na kakaunti ang recyclable materials at nasa 70 porsyento ang mga basurang bahay at iba pa, nagpasya ang South Korea na kunin ang kanilang basura na ang gastos ay binalik ng nasabing bansa.

AKSYON NG MALAYSIA

Halos kasabay ng pagbabalik natin sa South Korea ang pagpapabalik naman ng Malaysia ng basurang galing naman sa bansang Spain.

Matapos ang mainitang pagtatalo ng Pinas at Canada sa napabalik na basura, naisipan na rin ng Malaysia na ibalik ang nasa 450 toneladang basura na galing sa mga bansang Amerika, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, the Netherlands at Singapore.

Tiyak na daranasin ng Malaysia ang dinanas ng Pinas sa Canada pero desidido ang Malaysia na magpapabalik ng mga basura gaya ng ginawa ng Pi-

ng mga bansang nagtambak ng basura sa Malaysia.

MISLABEL

Ang mga kompanyang nagpapasok ng mga basura ay karaniwang kasabwat ng mga exporter ng basura sa pag-mislabel sa mga basura.

'Yun bang === sinasabing recyclable gaya ng plastic, bakal, aluminum o pwedeng ikumbert sa original o ibang produkto ang mga basura.

At magagamit ang mga ito ng mga bansang pinagtatapanan o kaya'y ayos nang produkto palabas ng bansa bilang export product.

Pero gaya ng nangyayari, kasama pala ang mga nabubulok at 'di nabubulok na mga basura gaya ng galing sa mga kusina, diaper na may mga dumi ng tao, gamit nang gamit sa mga ospital at iba pa.

Kaunti lang na porsyento ang recyclable at patapon talaga ang higit na nakararaming basura.

Sampol dito ang mga basurang galing sa Canada at South Korea.

Dalawang kaso tuloy ang nagaganap: hindi tamang pagtatapon ng basura at mislabeling.

E-BASURA

Ang mga itinatapon ng ibang mauunlad na bansa, mga Bro, ay e-waste kung tawagin.

Mga sirang kompyuter, laptop, cellphone na may mga toxic o nakalalasonong kemikal.

Sa mga bansang pinagtatapanan, style Philippine ang iba gaya ng pagsunog sa mga wire para makuha ng mga "nangangalakal" ang mga alambre, bronse, aluminum saka ibenta sa mga junk shop.

Ganyan katindi ang problema sa basura na dahilan ng pagkakasakit ng tao at pagkasira ng kapaligiran at kalikasan.

oOo

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo ay maaring iparating sa 0922840-8888 o email sa bant...



Remate

ANG DIARYO NG MASA

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SALUDO KAMI SA DENR, GOODBYE NA SA CANADA TRASH

MGA ka-idol, matapos ang anim na taon ay nakaalis na nitong Biyernes ang barkong magdadala sa 69 container ng basura ng Canada pabalik sa naturang bansa.

Alas-9 ng gabi, Huwebes nang umpisahan ang pagkarga ng mga container van ng mga basura sa barkong MV Bavaria at puyatan ang nangyari dahil natapos ito ng alas-3 ng ma-daling araw, Biyernes.

Pagsapit ng 7:20 ng umaga, ganap nang nagpaalam sa Pilipinas ang basura ng Canada na kinupkop at natengga sa poder ng bansa ng anim na taon.

Ayon sa environmental

groups, mahalagang mensahe ang ipinarating ng napa-kahabang pagkakatengga ng basura ng Canada sa bansa.

Mantakin naman ninyong sa tagal na nag-stay ang waste ng Canada rito sa atin ay nagmistulang poster child tayo ng waste trade globally.

Sabi nga ng Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines, "an unacceptable practice, deplorable practice for developed countries to get rid of waste they cannot process."

Pinag-aaralan naman ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na pansamantalang maglabas



LORD PETER SPIDER!
CP#0916-2531214

ng moratorium sa pag-aangkat ng lahat ng uri ng basura para umano makagawa ng panuntunan ang ahensya.

"If in case na i-total ban natin 'yan, kung hindi naman ganoon kalaki ang magiging economic impact sa atin o sa mga kababayan natin, puwedeng i-ban 'yan," sabi ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

Sa pagkakaalam ko sa ngayon ay pinapayagan ang mga recyclable at processed engineered fuel bilang mga uri

ng "waste" na inaangkat sa bansa pero ilan dito ang natutuklasang hinahaluhan ng ibang uri ng basura at nakalulusot.

Habang wala pang moratorium, plano rin ng DENR na gumawa ng malinaw na panuntunan sa kung anong klase ng basura lang ang puwedeng iangat ng Pilipinas.

Another major accomplishment ito kaya pinupuri natin sina DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu at Usec. Benny Antiporda. Salute!



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BASURA NG HONG KONG SA PINAS HAHAKUTIN

MATAPOS na ipauwi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang 69 containers na

basura ng Canada, hahakutin na rin ng Hong Kong ang ilegal nilang basura na itinapon sa bansa nitong Pebrero taong kasalukuyan.

Ayon kay BOC-Mindanao International Container Terminal (MICT) sub-station collector John Simon, iuwi na sa Hong Kong ang 40-footer container van na puno ng electronic waste o dinurog na mga gadget at computer.

Kinokonsidera ang elestronic waste na pinakamapanganib na klase ng basura dahil hindi lang kapaligiran ang naapektuhan nito kundi pati kalusugan ng tao.

Nauna rito ay idineklara ang mga basura na "assorted electronic accessories."

Nakatakdang isakay ngayong araw ang mga e-waste sa SITC Nagoya, barkong ipinadala ng SITC shipping line. Ang kaparehong barko ng shipping line, SITC Fujian, ang nagdala ng naturang basura mula sa Hong Kong sa MICT noong Pebrero.

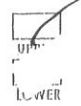
Isa pang tone-toneladang basura ng Australia ang dumating din sa bansa kamakailan.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

PEOPLES JOURNAL

EVERYBODY'S NEWSPAPER



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Basura, kapalit ng reusable items

HINIHIKAYAT ng Iloilo Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office o PENRO ang mga residente sa lalawigan na pakinabangan ang kanilang mga basura sa pamamagitan ng pagpapalit ng mga plastik kapalit ng mga reusable items.

Ang programang #BoteKolpalitKo ay inilunsad noong nakaraang taon upang magsilbing agarang solusyon sa kasalukuyang sitwasyon ng basura, sa pamamagitan ng pagbabawas sa mga plastik na tumatambak at bumabara sa mga daluyan ng tubig, ayon kay Mitzi Peñaflorida, senior environmental management specialist ng PENRO.

Sa ilalim ng programa, hinihikayat ang mga Ilonggo na ilagay ang lahat ng low-density plastics o residual plastics sa loob ng botelya. Ang mga plastic bottles na mabubuo ng residual waste ay maaaring ipalit ng mga eco-bottles at eco-bags.

Nanawagan si Peñaflorida sa mga Ilonggo na makilahok at makiisa sa programa ng lungsod, na inilunsad kasabay ng pagsisimula ng Philippine Environment Month nitong Sabado.

"This Saturday, we will launch a booth at Robinson's Place, Iloilo city proper wherein Ilonggos can redeem their rewards in managing their plastic wastes," sinabi ni Peñaflorida nitong Biyernes.

"Seven pieces of one-liter plastic bottles filled with residual waste will be exchanged with an eco-bottle, while five pieces of one-liter plastic bottles filled with residual waste equate to one eco-bag," dagdag pa niya.

Maaari aniyang ipalit ng mga Ilonggo ang kanilang mga basura para sa mga nabanggit na items sa tanggapan ng PENRO sa 5th floor ng kapitolyo.

Samantala, inilunsad din nitong Sabado ang 4K Program, o ang "Kahublagan Para sa Kabukiran, Kapatagan, at Kadagatan" (Aksiyon para sa Kabundukan, Kapatagan, at Karagatan) ng PENRO.

"The 4K Program is an approach wherein we call the attention – from the children to whatever ages – to value the proper way to develop our upland communities, forests, lowland communities, and coastal areas," paliwanag pa ni Peñaflorida.

PNA



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Angat Dam being closely monitored

By **FREDDIE C. VELEZ**

NORZAGARAY, Bulacan – "Angat Dam is being closely monitored, water still in critical level, heavy rains need to replenish."

This was disclosed by outgoing Governor and Vice Governor-elect Wilhelmino M. Sy-Alvarado, Sunday, as he hoped that the water level at Angat Dam will normalize as soon a heavy rainfalls coming by mid-June.

Citing reports from the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Manage-

ment Office (PDRMO) through Liz Mungcal, Alvarado said the water elevation of Angat Dam dropped to 168.03 meters above sea level as of 11a.m. yesterday from 169.37 meters recorded last Friday.

This meant that water elevation decreased by 1.34 meters in just two days, Alvarado said.

As it is, Alvarado pointed out that the reading of the water level in Angat Dam was already below the critical level of 180 meters, Angat Dam supplies over 90 percent

of Metro Manila's water needs.

The normal water level of Angat Dam is 212.00 meters. Also at 11 a.m. yesterday, the water level of Ipo and Bustos dams were recorded at 101.05 and 14.50 meters, respectively. Normal water levels in these dams are 100.00 meters and 17.00 meters, respectively.

Alvarado said Angat Dam needs more than 2,000 millimeters of rainfall to reach its minimum

depth of 210 meters.

Aside from providing water supply for Metro Manila, the Angat Dam is being depended upon for electricity generation.



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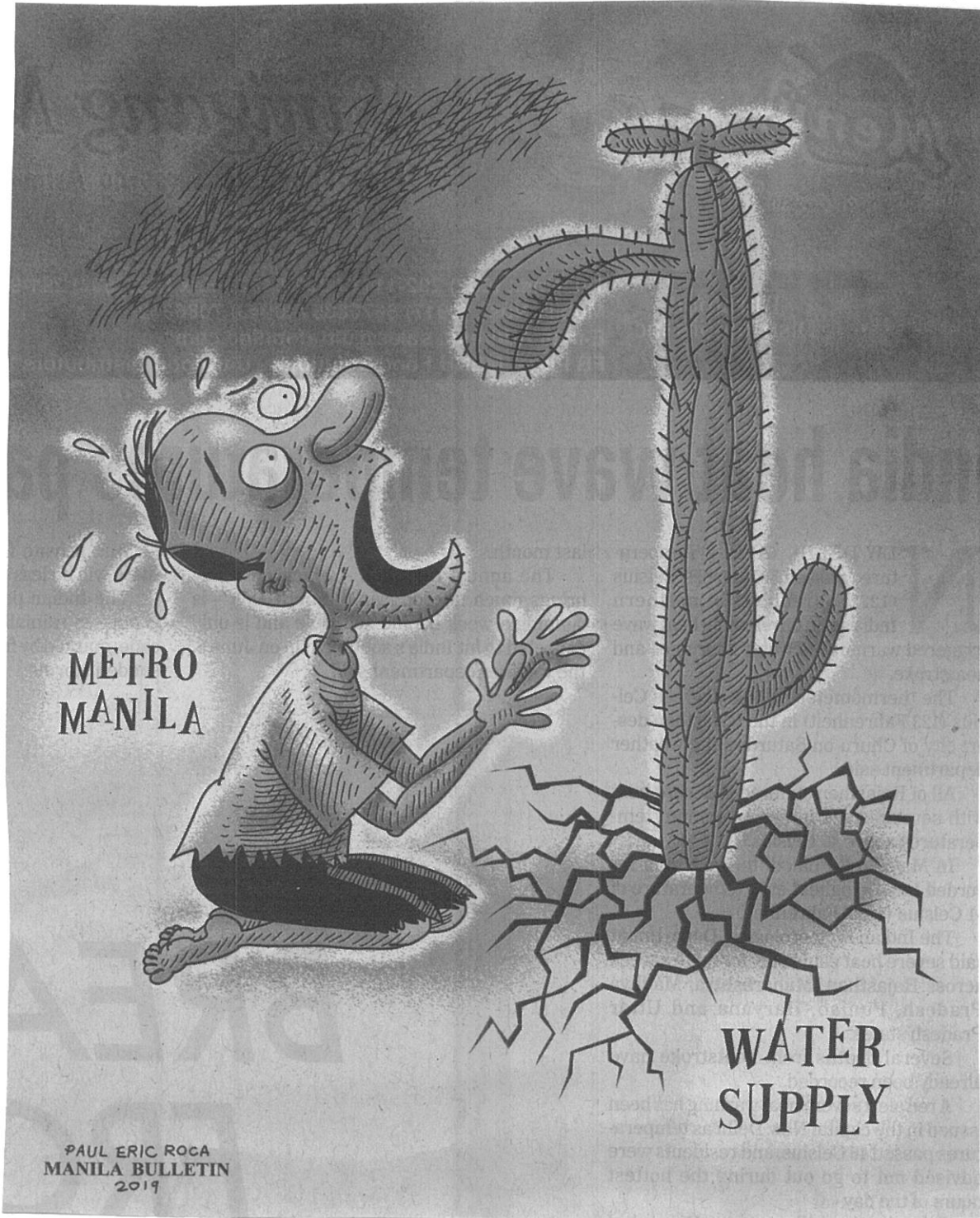
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Wawa Dam tapped anew for Metro water

THE water shortage that hit the East Zone of Metro Manila in April spurred a lot of proposals and plans to ensure it does not happen again – among them, saving our rainwater in cisterns during the rainy season, building weirs, in the absence of dams, to conserve river water, drawing of more water from Laguna de Bay and from old wells, and creation of a Department of Water for a more organized approach to solving our annual water problem.

Among all these and other good ideas within the realm of possibility, we are assured of one project that will definitely help to solve our water problem. This project, announced the other day by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), was the approval of the Wawa Bulk Water Project which will provide an additional supply of 80 million liters a day (MLD) by 2021, 500 MLD by 2025.

The project is a joint venture between Enrique Razon's Prime Infra and Oscar Violago's San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders Group to tap the Wawa Dam, also known as the Montalban Dam, in the Sierra Madre Mountains east of Metro Manila in Rodriguez, Rizal. Wawa Dam used to be the only source of water for Manila until Angat Dam was built and Wawa was abandoned in 1968.

The time has come for us to draw water once again from Wawa in view of the fast-growing population of Metro Manila, MWSS Chairman Franklin Demonteverde and Administrator Reynaldo Velasco said as they announced the approval of the Wawa project.

The 500 million liters a day it will provide by 2025 will boost Manila Water's water production by 30 percent for the East Zone of Metro Manila. Looking ahead, other possible water sources are now being studied, among them, Putatan, Cardona, Sumag River, Calawis, Rizal Wellfield, Lower Ipo, Muntinlupa, Laguna Lake, and Kaliwa Dam in Quezon Province.

Prime Infra Chairman Razon cited the decisive leadership of the MWSS for approval of the project which should solve the recurring problem of water shortage. The tariff impact of the Wawa project is expected to be minimal because of the strategic location of the new water supply source in the East Zone.

Metro Manila continues to grow and so the search for other new sources of water must continue, along with the upgrading of the established systems of tunnels and aqueducts. The Wawa project is a major step forward and should be followed by other steps so that we will not have to go through the ordeal suffered last April in the East Zone of Metro Manila.



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Gold to dominate PH's mining sector

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

The Philippines, one of the world's top nickel producers, will see gold contributing more to its total metals output for the year as impact of mines suspension and closure continue to linger.

In its outlook, Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), the government agency tasked to regulate and monitor the mining sector, said it sees gold output dominating the production scene moving forward, still outpacing nickel.

If ever, this will be a two-year streak for gold, which used to be dominated by nickel.

From 2012 to 2015, the country's joint production value of nickel direct shipping ore and mixed nickel-cobalt sulfide (MNCS) consistently took the top spot in total metals output, with a four-year average of almost 49 percent of the total metallic production value. The highest recorded contribution made by nickel was in 2014 at 58 percent, or P80 billion.

But due to a string of suspension of operation in nickel mines in Zambales and Palawan, gold bested nickel in 2016 and 2017, a trend that continued until 2018.

During the first three months of this year, gold also validated its dominance over the other metals with a contribution of 45 percent, or P12.22 billion, while the combined output of direct shipping nickel ore and MNCS took the second spot with 36 percent share, or P9.81 billion.

For the rest of the year, MGB's positive outlook for gold will be supported by the passage of Republic Act (RA) No. 11256 or An Act to Strengthen the Country's Gross International Reserves (GIR).

The new law exempts from excise and income

tax the sale of gold sourced from small-scale mining activities to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

The measure also covers the sale of gold by small-scale miners to accredited traders for the eventual disposal to the central bank.

This tax incentive will encourage small-scale miners and traders to once again sell their gold to BSP based on international market price instead of selling their gold elsewhere, MGB said.

In 2012, the government witnessed the disturbing drop of BSP gold purchases from small-scale miners and traders, by 94 percent or 16,548 kilograms from 17,638 kilograms in 2011 to only 951 kilograms in 2012.

This was after the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) on the same year strictly imposed the collection of the 2 percent excise tax and 5 percent creditable withholding tax (CWT) from small-scale gold producers/traders.

Right now, the BSP buys gold through its five buying stations located in Baguio City, Davao, Zamboanga, Naga and Quezon City.

"At the end of the day, RA No. 11256 will not only boost the GIR of the country but also increase the country's annual total metallic production value. Likewise, industries involved in jewelry making, medical, electronics stood to benefit from the passage of said law," MGB said.

During the period, the Masbate Gold Project of Filminera Mining Corporation and Philippine Gold Process-

ing and Refining Corporation in Masbate were at the forefront of gold production, producing 1,788 kilograms with estimated value of P3.92 billion.

Next to it was Didipio Gold Project of OceanaGold Philippines, Inc. (OGPI) in Nueva Vizcaya, with 1,047 kilograms valued at P2.30 billion.

Out of the country's 28 nickel mines, 18 reported zero production and only 10 reported production in the first quarter of the year. This was due to unfavorable weather conditions as well as to the closure of several mines.



Manila Bay Dev't Corp eyes backdoor listing

Manila Bay Development Corp. (MBDC), a property company, is doing a backdoor listing by acquiring a listed dormant firm, Supercity Realty Development Corp. (SRDC).

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Supercity Realty said its board of directors has approved the issuance of 990 million new common shares to MBDC.

MBDC has twelve parcels of land located in Paranaque City with a total area of 227,510 square meters.

Supercity approved the increase in authorized capital stock to P1.5 billion from P155 million previously.

The amendments will be submitted for approval to the stockholders during the company's annual stockholders meeting scheduled on June 26.

The shares subscribed by the new subscribers would be equivalent to 90 percent of the resulting outstanding capital stock of Supercity.

With the transaction, Supercity would now have property within the reclamation area, it said in its disclosure.

"The increase in authorized capital stock shall enable the corporation to secure properties along Roxas Boulevard, within the reclamation area of the Bay City (Boulevard 2000) development in Paranaque City, which would

be a source of recurring rental income or future income from development projects," Supercity said.

SRDC was listed with the Philippine Stock Exchange in 2003 to engage in the business of construction and related services and activities.

The SRDC board in February 2008 decided to wind down the company's construction business and re-focus its activities into real estate development.

SRDC to date, has not yet started any real development projects and remains engaged in the business of construction.

MBDC owns the 43-hectare area that is home to Uniwide Coastal Mall and Metro Manila Development Authority's Southwest Integrated Provincial Transport Terminal.

The bus terminal operates 24-hours a day and dispatches 900 buses that serve approximately 54,000 passengers daily.

Many companies are opting to do backdoor listings now as an easier route to going public.

The Philippine stock market has likewise been seeing a dearth in initial public offerings amid the volatility in the market brought about mainly by concerns on the lingering US-China trade war and the global economic slowdown.

— Iris Gonzales



Social enterprise pushing bamboo amid plastics revolt

A BAMBOO advocacy group, Bambuhay, is touting bamboo growing as an untapped source of income for farmers, and said the building material also has multiple applications as a potential plastic replacement and as a means of addressing a number of other environmental problems.

Mark "Sultan" Gersava, founder and chief executive officer of Bambuhay, told *BusinessWorld* in an interview: "I focused on bamboo because it is one of the underutilized crops in the Philippines."

Formed in 2018, the social enterprise promotes bamboo for use in products that can prevent the further worsening of plastic pollution, deforestation, and climate change. It started with capital of P10,000 and ended 2018 claiming revenue of P6 million.

The initiative's products include bamboo straws. In the pipeline are bamboo-based drinks stirrers, iced tea, and charcoal briquettes, developed in partnership with Department of Science and Technology Forest Product Research Development Institute (DoST-FPRDI).

The briquettes do double duty as an insect repellent from the smoke produced and the ashes can also be employed as a fertilizer.

Mr. Gersava said bamboo growing has many environmental benefits.

"It captures more carbon dioxide than any other plant. For every hectare, other trees can capture 48 tons, while bamboo can capture 62 tons. It also produces 30% more oxygen. So, it does not only provide livelihood, it also balances the environment," he said.

"You just have to plant it once, and it will grow forever. You just have to cut the mature ones," he said.

Currently, the company has a bamboo straw facility in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija, engaging 12 people in production and 37 harvesters.

It sources its bamboo from the Talavera Watershed Forest Reserve, which has 100,000 hectares of naturally-grown bamboo. The organization estimates that about 50,000 poles yields 200,000 bamboo straws.

The company's buying price of P2 per pole is higher than the market rate, which it calculates can yield a farmer between P600 to P1,200 per day, depending on productivity. The activity also keeps farmers from engaging in slash and burn agriculture.

The communities have stakes of 2%-10% in the project.

The group is planning production facilities in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija and Norzagaray, Bulacan within the year. Other target areas are Iloilo, Aklan, Bukidnon, Davao, and Sultan Kudarat.

It currently supplies clients like Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Bo's Coffee, Zagu, Happy Lemon, Gong Cha, the Marco Polo Hotel, the Fairmont Hotel, and the Crimson Hotel. It currently exports to Malaysia via the Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf chain. It is prospecting potential sales to companies in Canada, Germany, the US, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

"You need to have a prosperous life, you need to run a sustainable business, and you really need to have a sustainable livelihood for the people that this is a fair trade *na hindi lamang 'yung nag-start ng* (that not only the owner of the) business 'yung yumayaman (captures the gains)," Mr. Gersava said. — **Vincent Mariel P. Galang**



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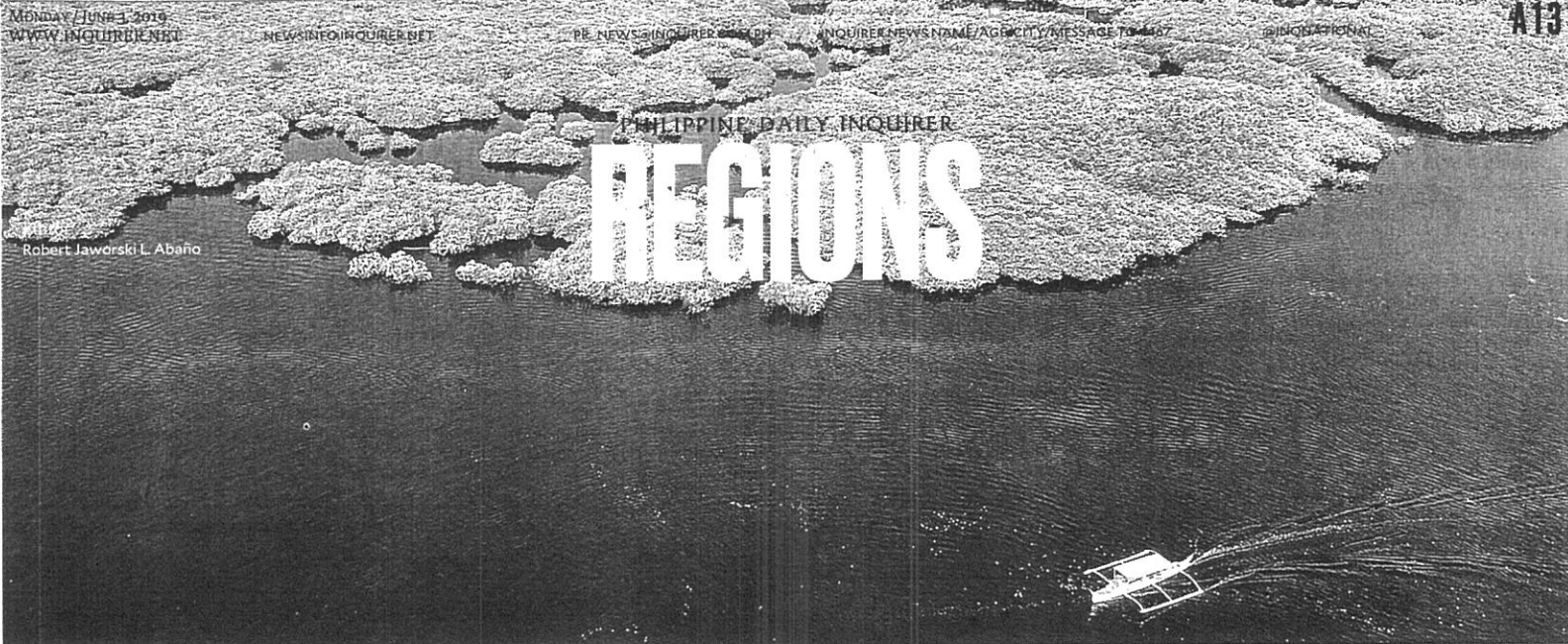
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Robert Jaworski L. Abano

MANGROVE PARADISE The 4,000-hectare mangrove stand in Del Carmen town on Siargao Island in Surigao del Norte province is among the largest in the Philippines. This patch hosts 44 species of mangroves, according to local officials. —ERWIN MASCARIÑAS

COMMERCIAL TRAWLERS

ALARM RAISED AS ILLEGAL FISHERS ENTER SIARGAO WATERS

By Erwin M. Mascariñas
@inqmindanao

DEL CARMEN, SIARGAO ISLAND—Alarmed by the resurgence of commercial trawling activities here, local officials and nongovernment organizations are calling for the national government's support in the fight against illegal fishing.

Mayor Alfredo Coro II said his town would need the backing of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the mar-

itime unit of the Philippine National Police to stop commercial trawlers from encroaching into municipal waters.

"Illegal fishers in our municipal waters are armed and dangerous. [Stopping them] is already beyond the capacity of the ... local government and our Bantay Dagat (sea patrol) team," Coro said.

"We are requesting support from national government agencies to help us curb illegal commercial fishing activities now [monitored] in the area of Halian

Island since the past local government operations against 'liba-liba' resulted in armed confrontations," he added.

Emboldened

Lawyer Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice president of Oceana Philippines, said commercial fishing operators had been emboldened by their knowledge that the government lacked vessels and monitoring systems to track them.

"We call on law enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts

to arrest and file cases against these illegal fishing operators since they have the mandate and assets to do so," Ramos said.

"Monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms all over the country should be strengthened or we will have no more fish to feed our families despite being an 'archipelagic' country," she said.

The nongovernment group Sentro para sa Ikauunlad ng Katutubong Agham at Teknolohiya Inc. (Sikat) also expressed

concern over the resurgence of commercial fishing here.

"It has always been our stand that it should be the small fisherfolk who should benefit from the marine resources [in the municipal waters] and not the large commercial fishing boats," said Wendie Entendez, field manager of Sikat Inc. Siargao field office.

Commercial trawlers

Gina Barquilla, municipal environmental resource officer of Del Carmen, said her office

first monitored the commercial trawlers on May 21 and 22 from passengers traveling by boat from Surigao City.

"On May 23, we received another report from the area and together with our Bantay Dagat, we confirmed, photographed and took video of the trawlers," Barquilla said.

"We were alarmed since we were not only dealing with one trawler here but as many as three [trawlers] were seen from May 24 to May 26," she said. INQ



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NEWS

Fishers' wives earn at seaweed farms

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—While the men are out at sea, the women of Barangay Isugod here have turned to seaweed farming. For the past few years, seaweed farming has provided them a path out of hunger and poverty. "Unlike in cities where there are permanent jobs or factories to work in, we only have the sea," says Mardy Montaño, leader of a fishermen's organization.

—STORY BY JHESSET O. ENANO

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Fishers' wives earn at seaweed farms

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By Jheset O. Enano
@JhesetEnanoINQ

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY— With their husbands out fishing in the open sea, the women in the coastal town of Quezon in Palawan province also prepare for a full day ahead.

They congregate on the beach, take their slippers off, and keep their hands busy at the seaside structure that houses their prized crop: dried seaweed.

The women of Barangay Isugod, nearly 200 kilometers south of Puerto Princesa City, have risen to the challenge to lead an organization of fishermen in their community.

Calling themselves the Cherish Fisherfolks Association, the women are bonded by the resolve to stay afloat against the fierce tide of job insecurity and climate change.

For the past few years, seaweed farming has provided them a path out of hunger and poverty, especially for the women who now share the role as their families' breadwinners.

"Unlike in cities where there are permanent jobs or factories to work in, we only have the sea," said Mardy Montaña, the association president. "When a storm hits our community, our cooking pots are also hit hard. When their fathers don't return with good catch, our children suffer."

When not attending to their seaweed, the women occupy themselves with activities inside

and beyond their homes. Besides raising children and supporting their families, they also arrange meetings, attend seminars or learn from trainings on how to be better farmers or entrepreneurs.

BFAR project

Seaweed was introduced to the coastal community facing the West Philippine Sea by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in the late 1990s.

When its price doubled in the market due to higher demand in the early 2000s, fishermen who had relied mainly on their nets saw its potential as an alternative livelihood.

"Seaweed farms somewhat became the fishermen's part-time job, which they tended to before heading out to fish," Montaña said.

Today, while men still primarily dive into the waters to cultivate their seaweed farms, women have taken an active role in harvesting, drying and selling their crop, which is used both as food and as an ingredient in desserts, medicines and cosmetics.

A line of fresh seaweed can weigh as much as 100 kilos, but is reduced to 25 to 30 kilos when dried.

But dried seaweeds sell much higher than fresh ones, reaching up to P85 per kilo. One line can sell up to P2,500 each, providing extra income for a mother to send her children to school, buy a motorized boat for



MORE THAN SEAWEEDES Reginaliza Gimotea considers seaweed farming in Quezon town, Palawan province, not just an additional source of income but also a time for bonding among family members engaged in the community project. —JHESSET O. ENANO

fishing, and even acquire a television and a satellite dish for her home.

Climate change challenge

While not as labor intensive as fishing, seaweed farmers are also at the mercy of the ocean and its temperaments. With rising temperatures and increasingly unpredictable weather,

the changing climate also poses a threat to their community.

In the five years that she has been cultivating seaweed, Reginaliza Gimotea has seen how the hotter temperatures heavily affected their farms.

"The seaweed fare much better when the temperature is cooler and the waves are bigger," she said. "When the warm



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weather lingers, our profit is scarce and debts become more frequent.”

Changes in ocean temperature, light intensity and salinity can cause seaweeds to suffer from ice-ice, a disease that induces whitening and hardening of its tissues and ultimately, adversely affects the farmers' crop yield.

But even in warmer temperatures, work never stops for the farmers, who instead use the lean months to prepare cuttings for the next crop season from June to March.

Family bonding

Despite the challenges, seaweed farming remains a viable option for livelihood for households here in Quezon, which the women also consider as a bonding opportunity for their families. Husbands (and sometimes, the wives who can swim) go out to sea to cultivate and harvest, while the women and children take charge of drying and selling.

When the weather is favorable, particularly during the rainy months, each family can earn almost P15,000 every 45 days to three months.

Their work has also recently become lighter following the donation of two seaweed driers to the association by the development organization Lutheran World Relief—one by the seaside and another floating near the farms, which shortened the drying period from almost a

week to two to three days.

“Our products now are much cleaner and have better quality,” Montaño said.

The benefits of seaweed farming in Quezon town have gone beyond providing profit, but also changed behaviors in the community, according to the USAID Protect Wildlife project, which provided technical support for the association.

Monitoring the seas

As their farms became nurseries for lobsters, krills and anchovies and grazing areas for marine turtles and dugong, the fishermen here have actively participated in monitoring the seas against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

At present, the association's members have buyers in Quezon town, who then transport the dried seaweeds to a consolidator in Puerto Princesa City, before these are distributed to food companies and factories elsewhere.

Their situation now allows for faster cash, Montaño said, but the women leaders dream that they, too, would have the opportunity to sell their goods directly, preferably at a higher price.

But those dreams would have to be taken a day at a time. This month, as they face the new crop season, the women of Cherish hope that the tides, literally and figuratively, will turn in their favor. INQ



Experts: Agri data 'crucial' amid climate change

By CAI U. ORDINARIO
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THE quality of the Philippines's agriculture data will improve with the use of area frame sampling and remote sensing, according to experts from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

In an Asian Development Blog, ADB Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department Associate Statistics Officer Pamela Lapitan and Consultant Anna Christine Durante said better statistics are crucial not only for production but also preparing for extreme weather conditions and climate change.

However, the two experts lamented that the lack of technical capacity in the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) prevents the country from tapping into the opportunities presented by both methods.

"So, what's keeping the Philippines and Vietnam from using these methods? One reason is the lack of technical

capacity in government statistical service. The development of the area frame sampling method is a major task that requires investment of technical capabilities and other resources," Lapitan and Durante said.

"Substantial work is still needed to strengthen the statistical systems and improve the methodologies needed for the use of area frame sampling and remote sensing," they added.

Lapitan and Durante said area frame sampling is a data collection method that involves the process of segregated land into defined areas while remote sensing often involve global positioning systems (GPS),

as well as satellites to gather information.

The authors said remote sensing is considered highly effective due to its versatility, completeness of coverage and accuracy.

They said a recent study showed that area frame sampling methodology significantly improved the level of precision of paddy rice statistics.

This is an advantage, Lapitan and Durante said, compared to existing administrative data collection in most countries. Methods that produce precise results are not usually publicly available while other data collected may even be politically motivated.

"The advances in remote sensing technology hold promise for the development of a complete and updated area frame sampling procedure. While remote sensing served as a prime contributor to the localization and geocoding of sampling units, these advantages are yet to be fully utilized for statistical purposes and ultimately, for policy-making," Lapitan and Durante said.

In March, the BUSINESSMIRROR published a Broader Look piece titled "Fuzzy PH agriculture data leads to glut, confused farm sector" which highlighted the

challenges in collecting agriculture data.

In an interview, University of Asia and the Pacific's Center for Food and Agri Business Executive Director Rolando T. Dy urged the government to adopt modern technologies such as drones and satellite images to collect and validate data.

The use of such equipment, he added, would reduce errors committed by humans in statistical work as they provide opportunities for cross-checking manually gathered data.

Philippine Institute for Development Studies Senior Research Fellow Roeh-

lano M. Briones also told the BUSINESSMIRROR that experience and technology are also factors that can spell the difference between good and bad statistics. He said the PSA had to go through years and decades before reaching a certain standard in data collection and processing efforts.

He added that while the PSA has become an independent agency capable of undertaking the task of collecting and processing quality data, there are other practices done by countries that are helping them come up with the data they require.



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REGIONS

Climate change alters farmers' sked

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—Rice farmers in Pangasinan are planting a month early for the wet cropping season to cope with climate change and avoid losses due to natural calamities. With the new cycle starting in May, they are expected to harvest within the first two weeks of September, before strong typhoons come. Irrigation water has been distributed in rice-producing areas in the province since April. —STORY BY GABRIEL CARDINOZA

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