

DATE : 04 JUN 2019

DAY : Tuesday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

**Strategic Communication and Initiative Service**



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## DENR moves to save eagle

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu called for a concerted global effort to prevent the critically endangered Philippine eagle – a national treasure symbolizing the country's identity – from becoming extinct.

“As an endemic species, the Philippine eagle already serves as a global heritage

**Turn to page 6**

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

### From page 1

that requires concerted efforts of the international community for conservation,” Cimatu said as the nation celebrates the Philippine Eagle Week (PEW) starting today to 10 June.

Cimatu said the country's decision to loan a pair of Philippine eagles to Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) makes a good starting point to 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 Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and WRS, Philippine eagles Geothermica and Sambisig are scheduled to leave for Singapore today.

“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 the 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,” the environment chief pointed out.

The PEW is observed from 4 to 10 June every year by virtue of Proclamation 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:



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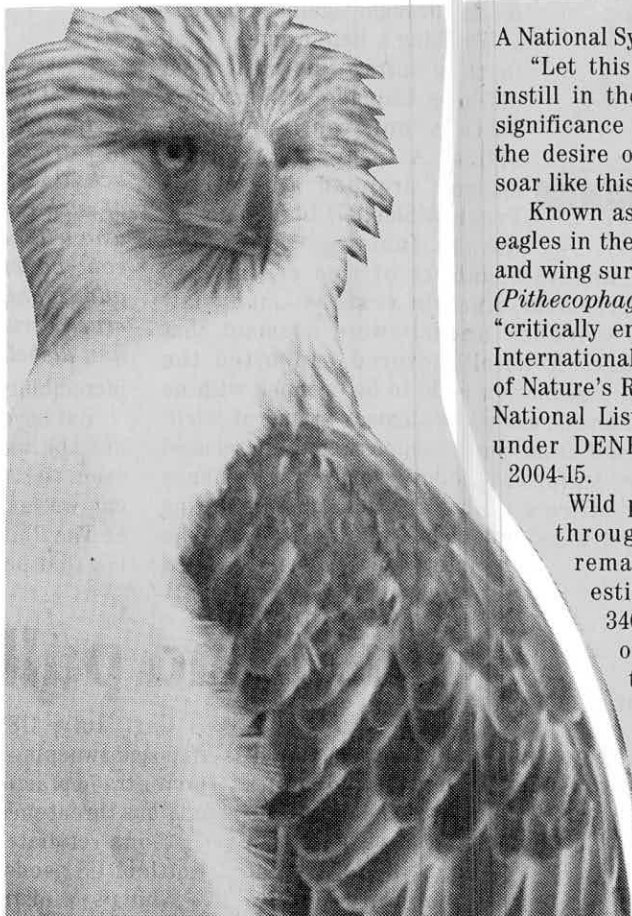
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# DENR moves to save eagle

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**Microcosm of natural disaster** Threat of extinction faces the Philippine eagle which is a symbol of the country's rich natural diversity that is being eaten away by the demands of economic development.

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 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 least 340 pairs. Hunting and loss of forest habitat remain the primary threats to its survival.

As part of the week-long celebration, there will be free public screenings of “Bird of Prey,” an award-winning documentary about the Philippine eagle, from 3 to 12 June in Quezon City and across

Mindanao Ave.

The documentary was shown in UP Town Center yesterday. It will also be featured at the SM Cagayan de Oro Downtown Premier today, KCC Mall de Zamboanga on 6 June, Robinsons Place Butuan on 7 June, Robinsons Place General Santos City on 10 June and SM City Davao on 12 June.

A learning event called “Keep Them Wild” on 8 June will be held in Quezon City. The proceeds of the event will be donated to the Wildlife Rescue Center for the construction and maintenance of new animal enclosures.

**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 treasure.**

Designed for schoolchildren from five to 14 years old, the event will provide the kids the opportunity to learn and apply the basic techniques in creating an artwork using the Philippine eagle as the subject.

A similar activity will be held from 5 to 11 June in three barangays in Manolo Fortich in Bukidnon, Butuan City and Davao City with youth from indigenous communities in those areas as participants.

**ADC**

# Fishkill prompts tighter policy on Taal Lake use

**DENR: Fish cage operators violated rules on stocking, feeding, ownership**

By Maricar Cinco  
@maricarcincoINQ

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is looking at improved water conditions in Taal Lake days after its dissolved oxygen level dropped, killing 605 metric tons of tilapia grown in fish cages at Laurel and Agoncillo towns in Batangas province.

Maria Paz Luna, DENR director in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) region, said last week's lake "crisis," which led to a P42.9-million industry loss, had prompted the agency to review the lake's carrying capacity and management plans.

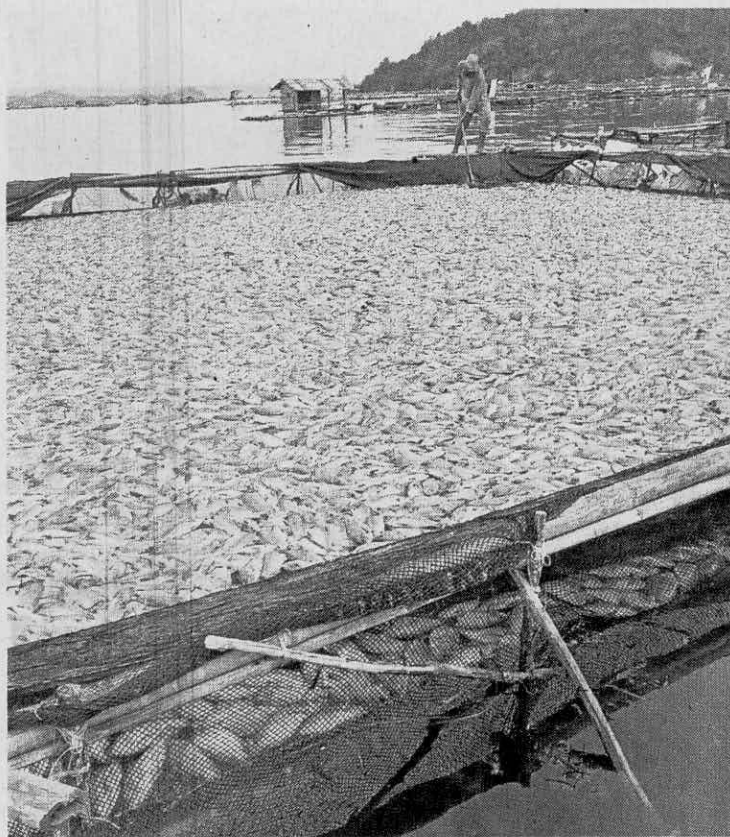
"We now have an imprimatur to hasten what we were going to do ... with this happening too often," Luna said in a telephone interview on Monday.

Monitoring by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources on Monday showed the oxygen level back to normal at 6 parts per million (ppm) at the lake's surface level, after it went down to as low as 0.86 ppm last week.

Fish, like tilapia and "bangus" (milkfish) which are cultured in fish cages in Taal Lake, require an oxygen level of between 5 and 6 ppm in order to survive.

## Violations

But while an oxygen level drop is generally considered a natural phenomenon, normally triggered by weather conditions, the DENR said it was also about time to review its regula-



**LOSSES** Fish cage operators in the towns of Agoncillo and Laurel in Batangas province lost at least P42.9 million after their tilapia stock in Taal Lake turned belly up last week. —PHOTO COURTESY OF DENR CALABARZON

tions on aquaculture.

"It was a combination of natural [and man-made causes]. The industry took a risk and here is nature's way of getting back," Luna said.

The DENR said it found a number of violations by cage operators such as overstocking and overfeeding. It also said cage owners skirted government policies, with many failing to build pits for dead fish.

It also discovered that many

cages were owned by big corporations and feed mills. "We learned that some residents would lease their permits [to own a fish cage] to corporations," Luna said.

## Moratorium

The government, in 2006, had set the ideal carrying capacity of the lake to 6,000 fish cages. Records showed that at least 14,000 cages were operating in the lake that year and it

took the government five years, or in 2011, to reach the carrying capacity that it set.

But Luna said the DENR might review the carrying capacity and lower it further, given the present conditions like growing tourism and infrastructure around the lake.

She said her agency was also looking at implementing a single growth cycle, from the current twice a year, to allow the lake "to rest." This means that fish stocking will not be allowed from January to May as reduced oxygen level and sulfur upwelling, which commonly triggers a fishkill, happen during this time of the year.

## Duterte concern

In Manila, President Duterte has ordered government agencies to undertake measures to minimize the impact of the recent fishkill in Taal Lake.

"The President has expressed concern about the fishkill in Taal, which according to fisheries experts is caused by sulfur [upwelling] triggered by the strong 'amihan' that accompanies an extreme temperature drop," presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a statement on Monday.

Panelo said the President had directed appropriate government offices to "closely monitor the situation, particularly the water quality in Taal Lake."

"He (Mr. Duterte) ordered increased vigilance over the prices and supplies, as well as the freshness of fish sold in the market," Panelo added. —WITH A REPORT FROM JULIE M. AURELIO INQ



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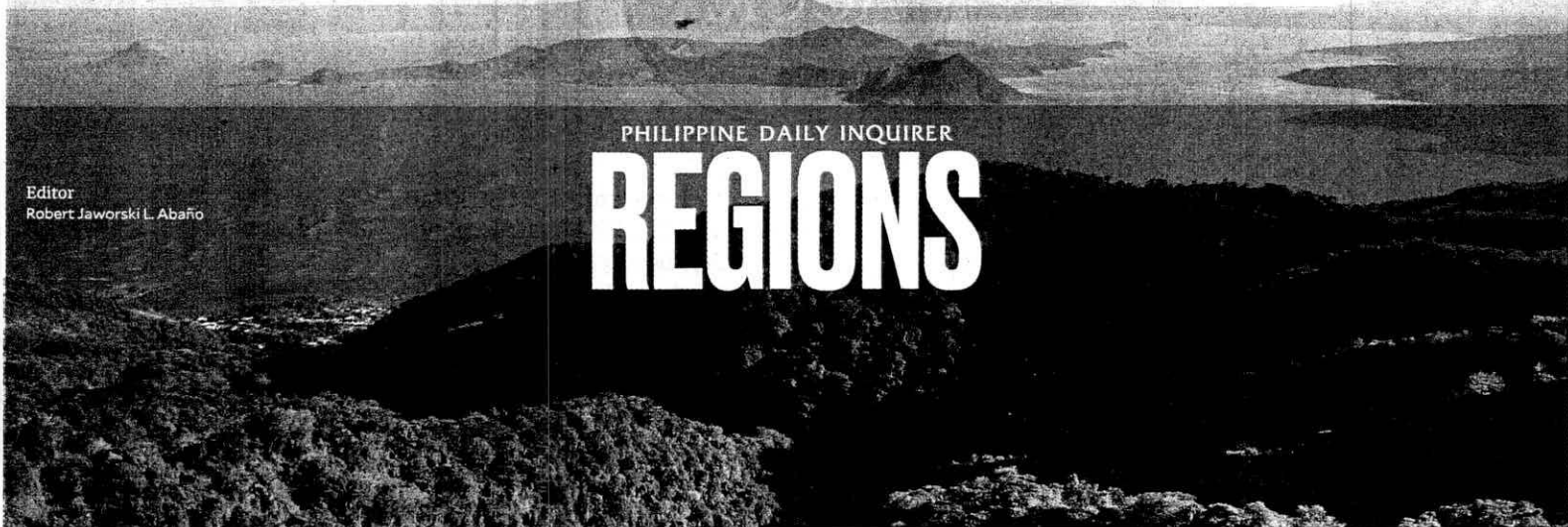
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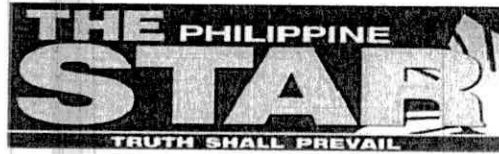
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Robert Jaworski L. Abañero

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER  
**REGIONS**

AQUACULTURE ZONE Sections of Taal Lake have been turned into an aquaculture zone, where fish cage operators grow tilapia and "bangus" (milkfish). —REM ZAMORA



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# Rody to gov't agencies Cushion effects of fish kill

By ALEXIS ROMERO

**President Duterte has ordered concerned government agencies to undertake measures that would mitigate the impact of a fish kill that hit Taal Lake in Batangas.**

More than 600 tons of *tilapia* worth P42.9 million were lost due to the fish kill, which was caused by

sulfur upswelling triggered by the *amihan* or northeast monsoon and extreme drop in temperature.

The fish kill affected about 121 fish cages in two towns, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte directed appropriate government offices to closely monitor the situation, particularly the water quality

in the lake.

Panelo said the President also ordered "increased vigilance" on the prices and supplies, as well as the freshness of fish sold in the market.

He urged the public to refrain from spreading false news that might cause alarm among the residents.



## Taal fish kills prompt warning on practices

By Rio N. Araja and Nat Mariano

THE risk of fish kills can be reduced, if not totally prevented, if fish cage operators adhere to good aquaculture practices within Taal Lake, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said Monday.

The agency made the statement even as President Rodrigo Duterte ordered concerned government agencies to ease the effects of the fish kill in the lake, Malacañang said.

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte was worried about the crisis in the fish cage industry in Taal Lake.

"The President has expressed concern about the fish kill in Taal," Panelo said.

"The President has directed the appropriate government offices to closely monitor the situation, particularly the water quality in Taal Lake.

"He also required the officials concerned to undertake measures to mitigate the impact of the natural phenomenon."

The BFAR vowed to continue conducting water quality monitoring and to ensure that fish cage operators are provided with the necessary technical assistance.

A regular monitoring of the water quality in the lake and its dissolved oxygen level will be conducted, the agency said.

On May 29, the depleted level of dissolved oxygen in the waters of Buso-buso and Gulod in Laurel and in Bañaga village in Agoncillo, Batangas, resulted in a fish kill.

The total allowable number of fish cages in Taal Lake is 6,000, but of this only 121 units or 2 percent were affected by the fish kill.

"This resulted in over 600 metric tons of losses in milkfish and tilapia stocks amounting to a total of P43.13 million," the agency statement said.

The agency then advised fish cage operators to closely watch their stocks after it noticed a drop in the dissolved oxygen level.

"Fish cage operators in the areas where the dissolved oxygen level is down were promptly advised to start the emergency harvesting of bangus and tilapia and use oxygen pumps or aerators as part of mitigating measures," the agency said.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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## Duterte to officials: Monitor Taal Lake

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte tasked government officials to mitigate the effects of the fish kill that decimated fish stocks in Taal Lake, Malacañang said on Monday.

According to reports, at least 605 tons of tilapia died in what the Department of Environment and Natural Resources described as the worst fish kill to hit the industry.

Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte directed concerned government offices to closely monitor the situation,

especially the water quality in the lake.

"He also required the officials concerned to undertake measures to mitigate the impact of the natural phenomenon," Panelo said.

According to fisheries experts, the fish kill was caused by sulfur upswelling, which was triggered by the strong Amihan winds that accompanied extreme temperature drop, courtesy of the El Niño phenomenon.

**RALPH EDWIN  
U. VILLANUEVA**





# BFAR, DENR PALALAKASIN ANG FISH KILL MONITORING SA TAAL LAKE

**PAG-IBAYUHIN** ng ahensiya ng gobyerno sa Calabarzon ang kanilang pagsisikap na makuha ang pinakamalaking dahilan ng huling fish kill phenomenon na tumama sa Taal Lake coastal towns ng Laurel at Agoncillo at ngayon ay kumalat na sa Talisay sa Batangas.

Tinatayang umabot na sa mahigit na 605 metric tons ang naging lugi dahil sa fish kill sa bayan ng Laurel at Agoncillo nitong nagdaang linggo.

Inireport ni Wilfredo M. Cruz, regional director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Region 4-A (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal

and Quezon) ang resulta mula sa kanilang water quality sample monitoring sa mga apektadong dagat sa baybayin ng bayan ng Agoncillo, Laurel, at Talisay noong Sabado na may indikasyon ng mababang level ng dissolved oxygen sa tubig na kasama sa fish kill na may sukat na 3.0 mg/l.

Ang level na ito umano ay mababa sa normal na tuloy-tuloy na leve ng dissolved oxygen sa water para sa fish culture ng kahit 6.0 mg/l.

Ang mga sample ng tubig sa mababaw na level na nakuha sa Agoncillo Barangay Bañaga na may 1.66 hanggang 2.89 mg/l at Bilibinwang na may 3.66 to 4.96 mg/l; Barangay Leviste

-- 3.81 hanggang 4.63 mg/l at Buso-buso na may 0.18 hanggang 1.81 mg/l sa Laurel town; at Barangay Quiling na may 2.60 hanggang 3.89 mg/l at Sampaloc na may 1.51 hanggang 3.15 mg/l sa Talisay town.

Nanawagan si Cruz Local Government Units (LGUs) na nakapalibot sa Taal Lake na udyukan ang fish cage operators na pag-ibayuhin ang kanilang monitoring at kung maaari, makapagani ng kanilang mga puwede nang ibenta ng mas maaga kaysa sa iskediyul.

Hinimok din ng BFAR ang Taal Lake fish stakeholders para maghanda ng kanilang oxygen tanks, pumps at engine sets, kasama ang kinakailangang kagami-

tan para mailpat ang kanilang fish cages sa mga lugar na ang kalidad ng tubig ay normal para maiwasan ang fish mortality o fish kill.

Ayon kay Nenita Kawit, chief of BFAR-Calabarzon's Batangas Inland Fisheries Technology Outreach Station (BIFTOS) na nakabase sa Ambulong, Tanauan City, inireport na ng Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (FARMC) sa Balete, Batangas ang pagkakatoon ng green discoloration ng lake water sa kanilang lugar noon pa mang Abril 8 nitong taon at ang ilang isdang muang at guno ang nakita na lututang-lutang sa ibabaw ng tubig.

Samantala, inireport

naman ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Calabarzon Regional Executive Director, ang abogadong si Maria Paz Luna, nitong huling araw ng linggo na ang fish kill ay nakaapekto sa ilang 121 fish cages, na naging sanhi ng pagkamatay ng 605 metric tons ng isda sa Taal Lake, at baybayin ng Agoncillo and Laurel.

"The 121 affected fish cages are from Barangays Buso-buso and Gulod in the town of Laurel and Bañaga in Agoncillo," sabi ni Luna.

"The fish kill is not expected to affect the supply and prices since the volume comprises only a small percentage of fish supply, mostly tilapia in the market and

not a cause for alarm to the public," dagdag pa niya.

Sinabi pa niya na pinayuhan na ang mga may-ari ng mga isda na ilipat ang kanilang fish cages o anihin agad ang kanilang stock ng mas maaga para maiwasan ang pagkamatay ng mga ito.

Inireport din niya na ang site inspection sa apektadong lugar sa Taal Lake nitong Huwebes ay nakitaan ng halos 200 metric tons ng patay na isda na nakalutang, na talagang napakarami na para ang mga ito ay mababon.

Nitong Biyernes, may tinatayan 33 fish cages ang natagpuan na may nakalutang na isda na nagtulak sa stakeholders na maghukay ng kanilang pagbabautanan.

Sinabi niya ang overcrowding sa fish cages ay isa sa mga dahilan na

nagresulta sa pagbaba ng dissolve oxygen sa lake waters, kaya ang Batangas provincial government at ang bagong nilikhang task force ay tumulong para pagtatanggaging ang fish cages.

Pero napansin ni Luna, na kahit na may mga regulasyon, ang fish cage stocking density ay laging hindi natutupad at sinasaway dahil ang mismong mga regulator ay walang daan para mabilang kung ilang isda na ang naroroon sa cages.

"The industry is incapable of addressing large fish kill incidences due to lack of large harvesters. The mortality pits certified as existing were nowhere to be found and the free trainings that all caretakers have attended were might as well have been in a foreign language," pansin niya.

PNA



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## Your fish is your future

**L**ying within the global center of marine biodiversity, the Philippines is one of the world's top fish-producing countries, and millions of Filipinos derive their livelihood from fishing. However, these rich and precious resources are declining rapidly, with research showing that 10 of the country's 13 major fishing grounds are already under threat due to overfishing, destructive fishing practices, habitat degradation, pollution, improper waste disposal and extreme weather.

It is estimated that the Philippines loses nearly P68.5 billion a year to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, impacting the country's economic development through lost revenue and unrealized opportunities for local fishermen and associated seafood industries. With fish making up the major protein source in the Filipino diet, this decline in fish stocks also has implications for the country's food security, particularly for the nearly 52 percent of fisherfolk who already live beneath the poverty line. Illegal fishing practices also put law-abiding fishers and seafood producers at a disadvantage in both the domestic and global marketplace.

As we observe the International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing on June 5, I'd like to thank our Philippine partners for working with us to address the threats posed by illegal fishing and to protect our marine resources for future generations.

For over three decades, the US government has worked closely with the Philippine government and local partners to achieve our shared goal of sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems. For example, the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) five-year EcoFish Project worked with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and local governments to increase the number and weight of fish by 24 percent in focus sites. USAID's new P1.3-billion, five-year Fish Right project, launched in 2018, works with BFAR, the

### COMMENTARY

SUNG KIM

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and a consortium of local partners to address biodiversity threats and increase fish biomass in select marine biodiversity areas in the Philippines.

Building on the gains of previous USAID-supported coastal, marine and biodiversity conservation projects that introduced an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, the Fish Right partnership promotes the sustainable use of critical coastal and marine resources, enhances the resilience of these resources, and improves the ability of Philippine authorities to sustainably manage fisheries—for the benefit of all Filipinos.

The DENR has partnered with other US agencies, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to develop and implement capacity-building programs for managers of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This effort will continue to train new MPA managers to more effectively address threats to Philippine marine resources.

Recognizing the important role law enforcement plays in combating illegal fishing and protecting marine resources, Philippine law enforcement officers have collaborated with US experts to better utilize sophisticated satellite data to detect boats fishing illegally in Philippine waters, and to prevent and deter illegal fishing. We have helped to train nearly 100 officers and inspectors from BFAR and the Philippine Coast Guard on practical law-enforcement techniques, such as how to board foreign fishing vessels, conduct comprehensive fisheries inspections, and draft briefings and affidavits for prosecutors.

This year, the US Coast Guard led a first-of-its-kind multinational fisheries law enforcement workshop in Manila that

built capacity for at-sea enforcement operations in Southeast Asia. The workshop, which included participants from the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia, strengthened domestic fishery enforcement in each country and helped to improve regional cooperation, coordination and interoperability.

American scientists also seek opportunities to collaborate with Philippine counterparts on marine science research projects. These scientific endeavors do not just increase our joint understanding of oceanographic phenomena or marine species distribution, they help inform global and local evidence-based fisheries management policies and ensure that there will still be fish for Filipino generations to come.

Ensuring the health of Philippine fisheries—and the country's economy—will not just require robust law enforcement and improved science, it will also require innovative new ideas championed by young Filipinos. To that end, we have supported marine-focused education and empowerment camps for some of the country's most inventive and motivated emerging leaders. We are proud to see the dynamic youth pioneer new social entrepreneurship models in their communities, establish green businesses that address marine challenges, and strive to educate those around them about the importance of healthy ocean ecosystems.

The US government is honored to work alongside Philippine government agencies, civil society and inspiring young Filipinos to address these challenges. And we will continue to work together to advance human and ecological well-being in the Philippines and to support initiatives that ensure the continued health of Philippine fisheries. We truly believe that your fish is your future.

Sung Kim is the US ambassador to the Philippines.



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### **DID YOU KNOW**

June was declared Philippine Environment Month by virtue of Proclamation No. 237 signed on April 4, 1988, by President Corazon Aquino. The celebration coincides with World Environment Day, which is marked on June 5. The proclamation emphasizes the necessity to heighten environmental consciousness among Filipinos. —**MARIELLE MEDINA, INQUIRER RESEARCH**



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# PASIG RIVER BODY TO RAP ERAP Drone discovers 'secret dumpsite'



**Eye in the sky** If not for a drone, the "secret dumpsite" and piggery polluting Pasig River, here shown being cleared of garbage, would escape notice. **BOB DUNGO JR.**

## Pat C. Santos

The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) will file charges against outgoing Manila Mayor and former President Joseph "Erap" Estrada over the discovery of a "secret dumpsite" at the Baseco Compound that floods Pasig River with trash.

PRRC executive director Jose Antonio E. Goitia disclosed the commission's plan during the weekly "Tapatan sa Aristocrat Forum" in Malate, Manila, claiming Estrada must have, at the very least, known about the existence of the dumpsite.

Said to be operated by barangay officials, the dumpsite has been existing for years during the incumbency of the two-term Estrada, who lost to Mayor-elect Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso in the last midterm elections.

The dumpsite is located on the left side of Baseco on reclaimed land. The trash at the site spills into the 25-kilometer-long Pasig River, which connects Manila Bay with Laguna de Bay.

**A 1,800-head piggery was also found throwing wastes directly to the 25-kilometer waterway.**

The PRRC official said after clearing that part of the Pasig River near the Del Pan Bridge, more trash appeared within hours, prompting them to fly a drone which led to the discovery of the secret dumpsite.

Unscrupulous barangay officials had been selling lots in the reclaimed, trash-filled land to informal settlers. An unlicensed piggery, housing about 1,800 swine heads, was also discovered in the area.

The piggery has no solid waste facilities and its waste materials go directly into the river.

Goitia said PRRC's legal team recommended the filing of charges against Estrada and the Manila City government for violation of Republic Act 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

PRRC will also go after the owners of several establishments and houses along the creek at the back of the San Beda College, Sta. Catalina College and the Arellano University in Legarda, Manila.

The commission aims to restore the original waterway based on an old map of Manila during the time when the Pasig River served as a very important transportation avenue, Goitia said.



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## Basura kapalit ng pera nilunsad ng DENR

NAGSAGAWA ng Palit Basura booth sa Ecotech Center, Sudlon, Lahug, Cebu City ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Visayas (DENR-7) kahapon para sa pagsulong ng tamang pag-recycle at pagtatapon ng basura.

"Garbage such as paper, plastics, electronic wastes and other recyclables will be swapped for cash and DENR collaterals such as reusable water bottles and metal straws," ayon sa Facebook post ng ahensya.

Tinanggap ng ahensya ang mga basura na

maaari pang ma-recycle tulad ng papel, plastic at electronic waste.

Bukod sa pera, posible rin umanong maging kapalit ang mga bote na pwedeng lagyan ng tubig at metal straw na maaaring gamitin kapalit ng mga karaniwang ginagamit na plastic straw.

Isinagawa ang aktibidad para sa pagsulong ng paggamit ng iba pang alternatibo buko sa single-use plastic.

Natuwa naman ang mga netizen sa naging aktibidad at hiniling na maipagpatuloy pa ang ganitong uri ng aktibidad.



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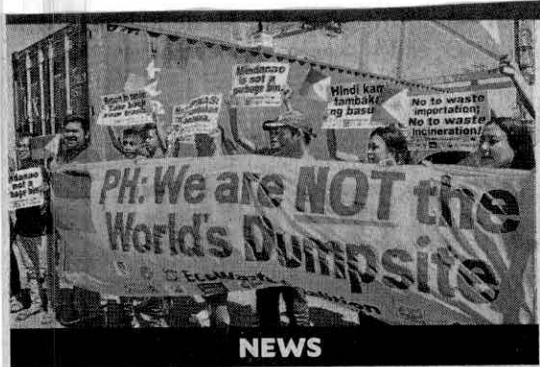
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**NEWS**

## Hazardous waste shipped back to HK

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Some 2.56 tons of electronic waste from Hong Kong on Monday were shipped back to China's special administrative region, days after 69 containers of garbage were sent back to Canada. EcoWaste Coalition hailed the government action while Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines called for better regulations to stop the country from becoming the world's dump. —STORY BY JIGGER J. JERUSALEM

**A7**

# Hazardous waste shipped back to HK

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By Jigger J. Jerusalem  
@inqmindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—  
“This is a victory for the Filipinos.”

Thus declared an official at the Mindanao Container Terminal (MCT) subport, who presided over a ceremony to send off a shipment of hazardous waste to Hong Kong, its point of origin.

“The export of this hazardous waste from Hong Kong in the guise of ‘assorted electronic accessories’ is illegal under the laws of Hong Kong and the Philippines and the Basel Convention,” MCT subport collector John Simon told reporters on Monday.

“It’s simple. They want to make us their dumping ground. But they did not prevail,” Simon said.

The 2.56 tons of electronic waste from China’s special administrative region were shipped back on a cargo ship, the SITC Nagoya, which left the port on June 3, four months after the trash arrived.

The container consisted mainly of shredded gadget parts and plastic scraps, which were packed in 22 huge sling bags. It arrived at the MCT subport in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental province, on Feb. 2 and was put on hold by the Bureau of Customs-10 (BOC-10) for “misdeclaration.”

Crowd Win Industrial Limited Corp., the consignee which is based in Pasay City, had said the shipment contained “assorted electronic accessories” but inspectors discovered that its actual contents were smashed components of electronic de-

vices, according to the BOC regional office.

## Misdeclaration

On March 5, the BOC issued a warrant of seizure and detention against the company for violation of Section 1400 (misdeclaration) in relation to Section 117 (lack of import permit) of Republic Act No. 1086, or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

Had the Chinese trash not been intercepted by BOC authorities at the port, 70 more container vans with the same type of wastes would have entered the MCT subport, Simon said.

He described the smell of

the e-wastes as “revolting,” as these were considered “highly dangerous” to public health.

“In line with the mission of the [BOC] to strengthen efforts against smuggling and other customs fraud, we are returning this unlawful shipment to protect our nation’s health and the environment,” he said.

The environmental watchdog EcoWaste Coalition reminded the government not to allow the country to become the world’s garbage dump.

The return of the waste to Hong Kong came on the heels of the departure of 69 containers of Canadian garbage, which had been in the Philip-

pires in the last six years.

## Mindanao not a garbage bin

Mark Petalver, program coordinator of the Davao City-based environmental group Interface Development Interventions Inc., said it was “very disturbing” to find illegal waste cargoes entering the country through the region’s ports.

“This alarming trend is totally unacceptable and should discontinue as soon as possible. Mindanao is not a garbage bin,” Petalver said.

By quickly returning the illegal waste shipment and skipping bureaucratic delay, the country is sending a clear warn-

ing to waste traffickers to stop sending foreign wastes into Philippine ports, said Aileen Lucero, EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator.

“We heave a sigh of relief as the entry of some 70 containers of similar trash was aborted with the seizure of this test cargo,” Lucero said.

## Basel ban amendment

The strong presence of local civil society groups in this important event, “indicates a growing concern among Mindanaoans against the use of the region’s ports as entry points for waste imports from overseas,” she added.



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**GOODBYE, GARBAGE** Members of the environmental watchdog EcoWaste Coalition witness the sendoff of electronic waste to Hong Kong at the Mindanao Container Terminal support in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental province, on Monday. The cargo arrived at the port four months ago. —JIGGER J. JERUSALEM

To protect the country from turning into a global dumping ground, the EcoWaste Coalition renewed its call for a comprehensive and immediate ban on waste imports and for the rapid ratification of the Basel Ban Amendment.

The amendment aims to prohibit the export of hazardous wastes and other wastes from developed to developing countries for any reason, including recycling.

Greenpeace also called for the ratification of the Basel Ban Amendment.

Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines commended the government's quick action on the illegal waste import from Hong Kong and called for better regulations to prevent the country from turning into the world's dump.

"We see a pattern of misdeclaration, falsified documents, fake businesses and loose regulatory systems that allow this to happen," said Lea Guerrero, the group's country director.

Guerrero noted that the trash scandals indicated that the country was "wide open" to illicit waste importation.

**Bill banning waste imports**

A lawmaker whose province was the recipient of illegal shipments of tons of trash from South Korea, Hong Kong and Australia has called for a total ban on the importation of wastes.

Misamis Oriental Rep. Juliette Uy filed on Monday a bill imposing an importation ban on "all forms of wastes in their solid, liquid, organic, inorganic and other forms." —WITH REPORTS FROM DJ YAP AND JHESSET O. ENANO INQ





## Customs ships e-trash back to Hong Kong

By **GERRY LEE GORIT**

**CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY** – After a few months of storage, the 2.561 tons of electronic waste (e-waste) from Hong Kong were finally sent back to their point of origin by the Bureau of Customs-Region 10 (BOC-10) yesterday.

The cargo, consisting mainly of shredded gadget parts and plastic scraps packed in 22 huge sling bags, arrived at the Mindanao Container Terminal (MCT) sub-port in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental on Feb. 2 and was put on hold by the BOC-10 for “misdeclaration.”

The imported garbage was shipped back to its point of origin on board the cargo ship SITC Nagoya, which departed the MCT sub-port yesterday.

The consignee, Crowd Win Industrial Limited Corp. based in Pasay City, declared the shipment as “assorted electronic accessories” but the actual content of the container van turned out to be smashed components of electronic devices, BOC-10 said.

On March 5, the BOC-10 issued a warrant of seizure and detention against the

shipment for violation of Section 1400 (misdeclaration) in relation to Section 117 (lack of import permit) of Republic Act 1086 or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

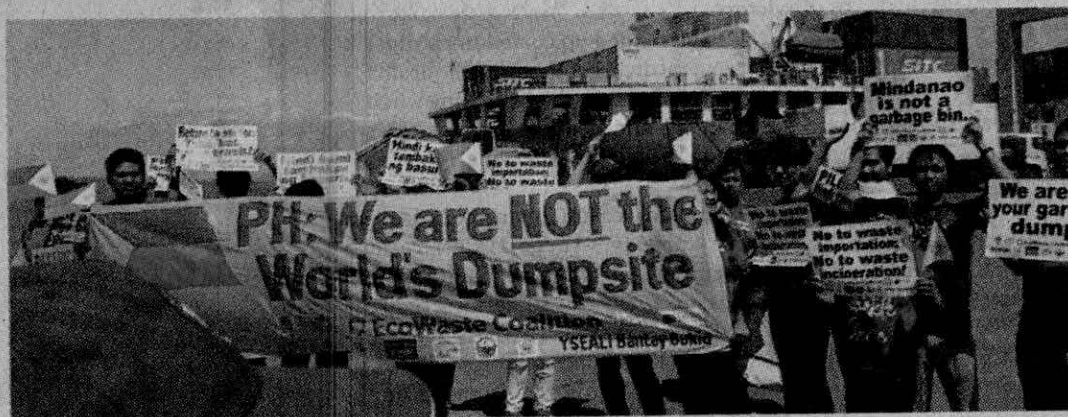
The re-exportation of the waste from Hong Kong came on the heels of the long overdue departure of 69 shipping containers of Canadian garbage after languishing in the Philippines for six years, EcoWaste Coalition said in a statement.

“The export of this hazardous waste from Hong Kong in the guise of ‘assorted electronic accessories’ is illegal under the laws of Hong Kong and the Philippines and the Basel Convention,” MCT sub-port collector John Simon told reporters following the send-off ceremony of the Chinese trash at the MCT yesterday morning.

“It’s simple. They want to make us their dumping ground. But they did not prevail. This is a victory for the Filipinos,” Simon said, adding that if Chinese trash had not been intercepted by the Customs authorities, 70 more containers with the same type of waste would have entered the sub-port.



## #nationataglance



ECOWASTE COALITION PHOTO

NORTHERN MINDANAO: TAGOLOAN, MISAMIS ORIENTAL

### Trash send-off

Members of the non-government EcoWaste Coalition raise their message against the illegal entry of foreign waste into the Philippines as 2.561 tons of mixed plastic and electronic waste from Hong Kong is sent back on Monday, June 3, after it was discovered at the Mindanao Container Terminal (MCT) in Tagaloan, Misamis Oriental. The trash, which arrived at the port last February 2, was declared as assorted electronic accessories but authorities immediately flagged the shipment. "By quickly returning the illegal waste shipment and skipping bureaucratic delay, our nation is sending a clear and unambiguous warning to waste traffickers to stop sending other countries' wastes into our ports," EcoWaste Coalition National Coordinator Aileen Lucero said in a statement. "We heaved a sigh of relief as the entry of some 70 containers of similar trash was aborted with the seizure of this test cargo," she added.



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# The Manila Times

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# Toxic junk sent back to HK

BY CRIS DIAZ

**T**AGOLO-AN, Misamis Oriental: A shipload of garbage declared as "electronic parts" left the port of the Mindanao International Container Terminal (MICT) at 12 noon on Monday on the cargo vessel *SITC Nagoya* bound for Hong Kong.

John Simon, the customs collector of the MICT sub-port, said environmental officials and members of media inspected the trash shipment before the vessel left.

"We want the witnesses to know that the cargo [was] 100 percent garbage," Simon said.

Simon said the cargo was dangerous because of its "very high chemical contents" from "computer junk parts."

The cargo, consigned to Crowd Win Industrial Ltd. Co. in Pasay City, docked at the MICT port in January 2019 with "complete

papers" purportedly coming from the Hong Kong-based company Hin Yuen Tech. Evn. Ltd.

Simon said the EcoWaste Coalition coordinated with the Bureau of Customs and joined in the probe along with environmental officials in the region.

He said customs officials found that the papers of the Hong Kong cargoes were fictitious.

"The BoC (Bureau of Customs), along with other government line agencies, are now investigating deeper to identify the culprits," Simon said.

During the send-off on Monday, officials of the regional Environmental Management Bureau

(EMB) vowed to make call on Congress to pass a law banning the importation of garbage.

"An alert citizenry and law enforcement agencies would deter any attempt by any foreign vessel to unload garbage in any part of the country," Simon said.

He gave assurances that no garbage shipment would be unloaded in the MICT, the port of entry of the industrial estate of Misamis Oriental.

On May 14, the BoC sub-port requested the EMB in Northern Mindanao to investigate "municipal waste materials" from Australia, which was consigned to Holcim Phil., a cement manufacturing firm

based in Luga-it, Misamis Oriental.

Holcim officials said the municipal waste materials were processed engineering fuel used in the manufacture of cement products.

In its findings, the EMB in Northern Mindanao, said the "municipal waste" from Australia were "pieces of assorted scrap plastics, cellophane, wrappers, chunks of hard plastics, textiles, glass cutlet, soil, stones, wood and other residual waste, which could not be readily recycled."

The BoC recommended the issuance of a warrant of seizure and detention of the 21-ton "municipal town waste" from Australia, now

being held in the stockyard of the Phividec Industrial Estate in Tagolo-an.

Simon said the trash shipment would not be transported anywhere until some legal issues were settled.

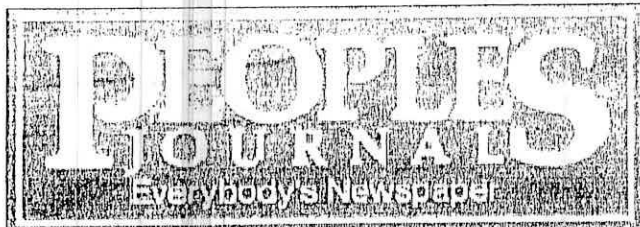
Last year, garbage from South Korea declared as recyclable materials was intercepted.

Simon said the BoC sent back 50 vans of garbage to South Korea.

Last week, the Canadian government took back the more than 60-vans of garbage it sent to the Philippines six years ago after the President threatened to sever ties with Canada if the toxic materials were not taken back.



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# 'PH not a dumpsite'

**By Joel dela Torre**

**"PHILIPPINES is not the world's dumpsite."**

Environmental watchdog EcoWaste Coalition (EWC) stressed this after the Philippines sent tons of garbage back to Canada and Hong Kong.

At yesterday's send-off ceremony for the seized mixed plastic trash shipment from Hong Kong, the EWC and its partner groups in Mindanao said: "Mindanao is not a garbage bin and any entries of illegal waste in the region's ports are totally unacceptable."

The more than 30 members of the environment group carrying a banner with words "PH: We are not the World's Dumpsite" showed their strong opposition to foreign waste dumping.

The group said the re-shipment of the waste export from Hong Kong and the 69 container vans of Canadian garbage were long overdue.

Mindanao Container

Terminal (MCT) port collector John Simon supervised the re-export to Hong Kong of at least 2,561 tons of mixed plastic waste packed in 22 sling bags that were wrongly declared as "assorted electronic accessories."

The unwanted wastes will be returned to Hong Kong through the container ship SITC Nagoya.

"In line with the mission of the Bureau of Customs (BoC) to strengthen efforts against smuggling and other customs fraud, we are returning this unlawful

shipment to protect our nation's health and the environment," Simon said.

The illegal waste cargoes entering the country according to Simon, were very disturbing and this alarming trend is totally unacceptable and should discontinue as soon as possible.

EWC national coordinator Aileen Lucero said by quickly returning the illegal waste shipment and skipping bureaucratic delay, the Philippines is sending a clear and unambiguous warning to waste traf-

fickers to stop shipping garbage into the country's ports.

"We heaved a sigh of relief as the entry of some 70 containers of similar trash was aborted with the seizure of this test cargo," Lucero added.

To protect Mindanao and the entire country from turning into a global dumping ground, the Eco-Waste Coalition renewed its call for a comprehensive and immediate ban on waste imports and for the rapid ratification of the Basel Ban Amendment.



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## 'Basura mula Hong Kong, wala na sa Ph'

**NAILABAS** na sa Mindanao Container Terminal (MCT) ang aabot sa 162 toneladang "assorted electronic accessories" mula sa Hong Kong.

Sinaksihan ng environmental group na EcoWaste Coalition ang simpleng seremonya kung saan bitbit nila ang kanilang placards at streamers na nagsasabing "hindi dumping site ang Pilipinas."

Nakita ng Chinese Navy at kapitan ng barkong SITC Nagoya ang aabot sa 100 raleyista at napakinggan ang kanilang mga daing. Sumaksi rin sina Atty. Floro Calixihan na nagsilbing district collector ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) MCT collector John Simon, gayundin ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Environmental Management Bureau regional director na si Rey Digamon, at si Aileen Lucero na tumatayong national coordinator of EcoWaste Coalition.



## Ban on trash shipments eyed in wake of garbage dumping

A BILL calling for a total ban on the import and export of waste was filed Monday morning at the House of Representatives while over in Misamis Oriental the Bureau of Customs held a send-off ceremony for garbage being returned to Hong Kong.

Misamis Oriental 2nd District Rep. Juliette Uy said in the explanatory note of

HB 9207, that the country is "awash with millions of tons of solid wastes, liquefied wastes, and toxic wastes. Our rivers, lakes, seashores, and seas are massively polluted by these wastes. Our cities, factories, and homes produce garbage like there's no tomorrow.

"We already have a lot of our own gar-

bage. The more garbage we produce, the shorter and more polluted our tomorrows will become. We certainly need not import any more garbage," he added.

Uy noted that "the Members of this Congress have not been remiss in their duty. There are dozens of pending bills

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### Ban...

*From A1*

and resolutions addressing the massive problems of solid waste management and air pollution we face."

"As we are all aware by now, at the Port of Tagoloan in Misamis Oriental, there still are over 5,000 tons of garbage yet to be returned to South Korea. Add to that the so-called municipal waste—processed fuel from Australia and another shipment from Hong Kong."

Uy said she filed HB 9207 because she wants to put a stop to "the practice of other countries and companies overseas of sending their garbage to the Philippines [which] is an insult to all Filipinos and an affront to our laws."

Meanwhile, the 40-foot container van containing shredded gadgets and computers from Hong Kong, is being sent back today from the Mindanao International Container Terminal. The shipment has apparently been in the terminal since Jan. 2, but only discovered on May 22.

MICT Port Collector John Simon officiated the reexport to Hong Kong of 2,561 tons of mixed plastic waste packed in 22 sling bags that were wrongly declared as "assorted electronic accessories."

The illegal traffic waste will be returned to Hong Kong via the container ship SITC Nagoya.

The reexport was witnessed by the representatives of the Bureau of Customs Region 10, Environmental Management Bureau Region 10, and civil society groups led by the EcoWaste Coalition.

"Today, we are shipping back one container van of mixed garbage consisting mostly of plastic scraps and shredded electronic parts to their source. The export of this hazardous waste from Hong Kong in the guise of 'assorted electronic accessories' is illegal under the laws of Hong Kong and the Philippines and the Basel Convention," Simon said.

"In line with the mission of the BOC to strengthen efforts against smuggling and other Customs fraud, we are returning this unlawful shipment to protect our nation's health and the environment," he added.

"We find it very disturbing that illegal waste cargoes are entering the country through the region's ports. This alarming trend is totally unacceptable and should discontinue as soon as possible. Mindanao is not a garbage bin," said Atty. Mark Petalver, Program Coordina-

tor, Interface Development Interventions Inc., a Davao City-based environmental NGO.

"By quickly returning the illegal waste shipment and skipping bureaucratic delay, our nation is sending a clear and unambiguous warning to waste traffickers to stop sending other countries' wastes into our ports," said Aileen Lucero, National Coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition. "We heaved a sigh of relief as the entry of some 70 containers of similar trash was aborted with the seizure of this test cargo."

"The strong presence of local civil society groups in this important event indicates a growing concern among Mindanaoans against the use of the region's ports as entry points for waste imports from overseas. We encourage them, the local authorities and the general public to keep a close watch over illegal waste traffic in the region," she added.



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## Total ban sa import, export ng basura ipinanukala

Naghain kahapon si Misamis Oriental Rep. Juliette Uy ng panukalang batas na nagsusulong ng total ban sa importation at exportation ng waste, processed waste, at waste by-products.

Inihain niya ang House Bill 9207 para pigilan ang "practice of other countries and companies overseas of sending their garbage to the Philippines" na inilarawan niyang "[an] insult to all Filipinos and an

affront to our laws."

"We already have a lot of our own garbage. The more garbage we produce, the shorter and more polluted our tomorrows will become. We certainly need not import any more garbage," ani Uy sa paghahain ng panukala.

"As we are all aware by now, at the Port of Tagoloan in Misamis Oriental, there still are over 5,000 tons of garbage yet to be

returned to South Korea. Add to that the so-called municipal waste - processed fuel from Australia and another shipment from Hong Kong," aniya.

Nakasaad sa House Bill 9207 na ilegal para sa sino mang tao, grupo, negosyo, korporasyon, o opisina ng gobyerno na mag-angkat o magluwas ng anumang uri at gaano man karaming basura.

**Charissa M. Luci-Atienza**



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## Isinusulong sa Kamara **TOTAL BAN SA PAG-IMPORT NG BASURA**

**T**ULUYAN nang pinatitigil ng isang kongresista ang pag-aangkat ng basura sa Filipinas.

Inihain ni Misamis Oriental Rep. Juliette Uy ang House Bill 9207 na nagpapatupad ng total ban sa importasyon ng anumang solid, liquefied at toxic wastes mula sa ibang bansa.

Giit ng kongresista, polluted

na ng mga basurang galing sa ibang bansa ang mga ilog, lawa at karagatan sa Filipinas.

Aniya, malaking insulto ito sa mga Filipino at sa batas.

“Bukod pa rito, problemado na tayo sa tila walang katapusang basura mula sa mga sarili nating siyudad, factories at mga tahanan,” sabi pa ni Uy.

Giit pa niya, hindi na dapat

tumanggap ng basura mula sa ibang bansa at huwag nang pumayag na gawing tambakan ng basura ang Filipinas.

Matatandaang ibinalik na kamakailan ang basura ng Canada na sinundan ng basura ng Hong Kong kahapon, habang nasa bansa pa ang basura ng South Korea at municipal waste ng Australia. **CONDE BATA**





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### **Total ban sa imported na basura isinulong**

Para tuluyan nang hindi makapasok sa Pilipinas ang mga basura mula sa ibang mga bansa, isinusulong sa Kamara ang panukalang batas para sa total ban ng importasyon ng anumang solid, liquified at toxic wastes ng ibang mga bansa.

Sa House Bill 9207 na inihain ni Misamis Oriental Rep. Juliette Uy, tuluyan na niyang pinapigtigil ang pag-import ng basura sa Pilipinas.

Dahil dito, isinusulong ni Uy na hindi na dapat tumanggap ng basura mula sa ibang bansa at huwag nang pumayag na gawing tambakan ng basura ang Pilipinas. (Gemma A. Garcia)



# 'Endo' in government



*'The approval of the anti-"endo" bill, hopefully, will likewise put an end to "contractualization" in the government.'*

## CROSSHAIRS

REY O. ARCILLA

### CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who has taken to tweeting, attributed the return of the Canadian trash to his friend and fellow tweeter Amboy Locsin.

In a tweet, Lacson said:

"Teddy Boy Locsin: call it political will, resourcefulness, motor-mouth, makulit, tigas-ulo, barumbado, etc. The guy puts his money where his mouth is. Canadian garbage is sailing back to Canada. If I were him, I'd fill up all available space with Philippines garbage."

Excuse me, but Locsin had nothing to do at all with effecting the return of the Canadian trash. He merely carried out what his Boss Digong wanted done, period. The fellow was all bombast, nothing more.



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MEDIUM RARE

## Trashy tsunami



By **JULLIE Y. DAZA**

**G**ARBAGE as metaphor? Tons and tons brought into our beautiful once-pristine islands by merchants without a conscience – what's a clean conscience against dirty profits?

At no time in the history of smuggling has there been a more noxious tsunami of trash dumped on our shores by "rich" countries such as Canada, Australia, Korea, and Hong Kong, among the most recent. And what about the instruments of death by suicide in slow motion arriving in the form of cocaine and shabu not only on land but in the water?

Which is worse, mind-altering drugs or hazardous waste?

Their sources are foreign, but the consignees are our own people. Which is worse, to be insulted by other nations or betrayed by our own merchants who literally turn trash into cash and poison the very air, water and earth.

The most audacious of the importers of "basura" had the cheek to ask for permission to keep two of 66 containers (since 2013) "for sentimental reasons"!

The mistake was not giving in to the ludicrous request, for if he had been allowed to do so, his neighbors would more than gladly have lynched him for disturbing the peace and odor of their surroundings.

Exporters know which countries to target for the weakness of their systems of surveillance and detection; they know which ports are more hospitable than others. "Tara na," as they say at customs. The newly elected lawmakers have no time to lose in classifying such crimes as economic sabotage and largescale destruction of the environment.

If we were able to clean up Boracay in six months by punishing the guilty, we can throw the book at those who are willing to sell their country for a mountain of junk. Why not bury them alive in their own waste?!

In the age of garbage as a metaphor of our wanton disregard for Mother Nature and the environment, one sniff of hope emanates from Manila's City Hall, whose new mayor has the experience to help us look at other people's garbage as their problem and not ours to agonize over.



## Medium Rare

Julie Y. Daza

# Trashy tsunami

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to the ludicrous request, for if he had been allowed to do so, his neighbors would more than gladly have lynched him for disturbing the peace and odor of their surroundings.

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## FINDING ANSWERS

# The Philippines as one big dump

By **ATTY. JOEY D. LINA**

Former Senator



**I**T looked like a bittersweet victory of some sort. Watching TV news images of the ocean vessel MV Bavaria leaving Subic Bay Freeport last Friday and carrying 69 containers of garbage on its way back to Canada can be exhilarating after all that transpired.

After being made to suffer since 2013 the humiliation of being stuck with the containers of supposed recyclable materials that turned out to be rotting household wastes, the Philippines has finally been accorded the respect that seemed nowhere to be found when it looked like all those wastes were meant to be disposed of here rather in Canada's pristine backyard.

Some felt the issue was an assault not only on our national dignity but on our country's self-respect. "Allowing Canada to dump their toxic garbage here is submitting to their arrogance and misplaced superiority," Sen. Panfilo Lacson had said.

Amid the ultimate insult of being trashed by a country which many Filipinos thought was taking its own sweet time in doing the right thing, it certainly is understandable why an exasperated President Duterte became so impatient about taking out of the country the tons of Canadian trash.

Many saw it as gobbledygook, run-around, or circumlocution, and they probably were not way off in trying to describe apparent efforts to bring forth the impression that, in the words of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, "Canada is very much engaged in finding a solution" to the stinking garbage dispute.

"Canadian legal regulations prevented us from being able to receive the waste back to Canada. We had legal barriers and restrictions that prevented us from taking it back, but that's done now," Trudeau had said in

November, 2017, while in Manila for an ASEAN summit. Still, no concrete action had happened since.

Filipinos longing for concrete action on the trash felt that words like "swift resolution" and "prompt repatriation" frequently used by Canadian officials were simply meaningless. Many felt it was preposterous that after six years, Canada was still "examining the full spectrum of issues related to the removal of the waste with a view to a timely resolution."

It took an outburst from President Duterte for things to move quickly. He threatened war and said he would "set sail to Canada" and dump their garbage there. The Philippine ambassador and consuls to Canada were recalled when a May 15 deadline to remove the trash was not met. The pressure on Canada was further increased when its plan to complete the trash removal by the end of June was rejected.

Besides the resoluteness displayed by President Duterte in calling on Canada to act on the pestering issue, credit also goes to the relentless efforts of environmental advocates like EcoWaste Coalition, Greenpeace, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Break Free from Plastic Movement, Ban Toxics, and other groups.

Although the tons of Canadian garbage are on its way back to the sender, the trash issue prevails as wastes from other countries like Australia and South Korea have also found its way to the Philippines. It was also reported that mixed plastic and electronic wastes have also arrived from Hong Kong.

Greenpeace is urging a ban on the entry of "all forms of hazardous wastes, including those under the guise of recycling" as it called on the Philippines to ratify an amendment to the Basel Convention, a 30-year-old treaty that prevents countries from shipping hazardous waste to the de-

veloping world without consent.

The Basel Convention was amended recently to prohibit shipment of mixed, unrecyclable, and contaminated plastic waste "without prior informed consent" of developing countries. "Ratifying the Basel Ban Amendment will plug the loophole that allows the shipment of other forms of hazardous waste under the guise of recycling," Abigail Aguilar of Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines said.

Apart from wastes coming from other countries, there's also the persistent problem of local trash. Last March, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) released findings of its five-year trash audit showing that "Filipinos were throwing away 48 million plastic shopping bags, 45 million thin-film bags, and three million diapers every day" that "the average Filipino uses 591 pieces of plastic sachets, 174 shopping bags, and 163 plastic translucent bags yearly."

"Plastic is a pollution problem, and it starts as soon as the plastic is made. The only way to manage single-use plastic is to make less of it," according to GAIA Asia-Pacific Executive Director Froilan Grate.

The trash audit conducted by Mother Earth Foundation (MEF) which collected trash samples from households in 21 selected sites around the Philippines showed that "the sheer volume of trash is beyond the capacity of local governments to manage," according to MEF Chair Sonia Mendoza.

Gauging from the current situation, it has become imperative not only to improve waste management, but to regulate the production and usage of single-use plastics, and to find other ways of packaging goods. All these are urgent to prevent the Philippines from becoming one big garbage dumpsite.

Email: [finding.lina@yahoo.com](mailto:finding.lina@yahoo.com)



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#MINDANAO

# Goodbye trash and old political attitudes!

By **JOHN TRIA**

**A**S we bid the containers of 6-year-old Canadian trash goodbye, we also welcome the clearer waters of Manila Bay, a cleaner Boracay, and yes, a safer Diwalwal here in the newly minted province of Davao de Oro, the former Compostela Valley.

These achievements have spawned similar clean-up activities and have raised awareness about single-use plastics, prompting many local governments to contemplate banning their use.

Images of such events evoke a lot of pride among many citizens. On social media, they have welcomed a newfound sense of political will to implement important laws that for so long have not been enforced.

Their enthusiasm and sense of hope is understandable.

These events constitute longed-for positive changes and, therefore, a challenge for our newly elected leaders, and compel us to throw away old

political attitudes, and in their place, bring new political will.

These changes challenge the political ethos of the post-EDSA generation where strong statements or expressions of state power, even the strict implementation of important laws, were always challenged since they "smack of dictatorship" and were, therefore, challenged when they first emerge.

Instead of a consistent application of rules, exceptions and under-implementation were rife under this old political milieu. A good example is the many Local government units that have yet to fully implement the almost 20-year-old Solid Waste Management Act. Another example – the thick reams of temporary restraining orders that hobbled implementation of vital infrastructure.

Governments then were so afraid of adverse public opinion or reactions from the powers that be that necessary programs were often compromised, with bureaucrats often selectively implementing policies.



In today's dispensation, necessary changes are welcomed by many quarters as political will rightfully exercised for the benefit of the majority. Apart from the Canada trash being sent back, the Boracay and Manila Bay clean ups, examples of this successfully wielded include defeat of ISIS in Marawi, Build Build projects, the TRAIN Law, and the Ease of Doing Business Law, and even the 10-year passport and 5-year drivers license validities which citizens have availed of.

These and many other landmark policies and programs were never thought possible. They have been frontloaded in the first half of the Duterte presidency.

Thus, expectations are high. People anticipate and demand that these be implemented and that more positive results of such programs be apparent.

In particular, this new found political will necessarily will be tested in how well our poverty numbers will fall as a result of new measures such as the Magna Carta for the Poor, the

4PS law, Sagip Saka and universal health care and free state College education. We need new tax measures such as sin taxes to fund them.

In all, it means that strong expressions of political will are no longer matters to hide or be ashamed of. The popularity of the President, the victory of the ruling party's candidates reveal an endorsement of this will.

They reveal a strong desire among many to use this will for this resolve to continue to beat out our inherited chronic na-

tional ills and bring the Filipino to new heights of stability and abundance.

As new officials take their oaths of office by the end of the month, let us all remind them about their responsibility to apply political will and implement the measures people clamor for. Their capability to do so may be the yardstick by which voters will measure them in the 2022 polls.

*For reactions: [facebook.com/johntrialog](https://www.facebook.com/johntrialog)*



## DROGA AT BASURA

SA mga nakalipas na isyu ay kung ilang ulit na nating tinalakay ang mga kalokohan na kinasangkutan ng mga Chinese national mula sa pambu-bully ng ating mga mangingisda sa West Philippine Sea hanggang sa pagdukot ng sarili nilang mga kababayan na narito sa ating bansa.

Akalain ninyong kamakailan ay apat na Tsino naman ang nahulihan ng ipinagbabawal na shabu na nagkakahalaga ng P124 milyon ng mga miyembro ng National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) sa isinagawang operasyon sa Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

Ang mga dayuhan na nakuhanan ng droga ay kinilala ng mga awtoridad bilang sina Lu Jun, Zuo Sheng Li, Ye Ling at Li Yu.

Una umanong bumagsak sa kamay ng mga taga-NBI si Lu Jun na nahulihan ng 10 pakete ng shabu. Kasunod nito ay nahuli rin ang tatlo pa niyang kasabwat na mga kapwa Tsino matapos makakuha ang NBI ng mga search warrant.

Napag-alaman na ang pagdakip sa naturang mga dayuhan ay bunga ng dalawang araw na surveillance ng mga taga-NBI sa kanilang mga iligal na gawain.

Pero hindi lang sa pambu-bully at pagkakasabit sa mga krimen na tulad ng kidnapping at pag-iingat ng iligal na droga nasasangkot ang mga Tsino. Nagpapasok na rin sila ng basura sa Misamis Oriental mula Hong Kong simula ng taong kasalukuyan. Ang Hong Kong ay administrative region ng China.

Ayon kay Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo, ang



## FIRING LINE

ni ROBERT B. ROQUE, JR.

naturang basura na idineklarang "assorted electronic accessories" ay agad din ipababalik ng Bureau of Customs sa HK.

Noong Enero kasi ay isang malaking container van na naglalaman ng mahigit 25 tonelada ng iba't ibang magkakahalong basurang plastik ang dumating sa Mindanao International Container Terminal sa Misamis Oriental.

Kaya nanawagan si Panelo sa mga ahensya ng gobyerno na ituloy ang mahigpit na pagbabantay at pigilan ang pagpasok ng mga kargamento na naglalaman ng basura sa loob ng ating teritoryo.

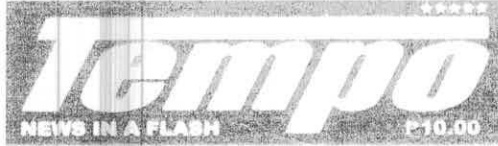
Dapat lang naman ito at kung pupuwede ay triplehin pa ng administrasyon ang pagbabantay dahil ilang ulit na tayong ginagawang basurahan ng ibang bansa tulad ng Australia, Canada at South Korea.

Ang bansa natin ay hindi basurahan ng mundo. Ang pambababoy na ito ay hindi lang maituturing na maliwanag na kawalan ng respeto at pambabastos kundi sampal sa pagmumukha ng bawat Filipino.

Huwag sana nilang gawin sa atin ang anomang bagay na hindi nila ikatutuwa kung gagawin din natin sa kanila.



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### WASTE MANAGEMENT IN CAVITE



**RECYCLED** Tarpaulins used by politicians during this year's election campaign find new use as shopping bags and wallets in Imus City. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## CAMPAIGN TARPS, PLASTIC TRASH END UP IN TRADE FAIR

Campaign tarpaulins discarded after the May 13 elections have ended up on display racks as shopping bags and wallets in a trade fair in Cavite province.

Doris Sagenes, environment officer of Imus City, said the local government sent out a directive to all village officials to take down and collect the tarpaulins in their areas.

Making no distinction of political parties or whether the candidates won, the city had collected hundreds of the campaign materials from its 97 villages.

They were taken to the city's ecological center and sewn into bags, now being sold at the trade fair for P60 each.

#### 'BasuRaffle'

Sagenes said it was part of the city's three-year-old program to reduce plastic waste. Imus has been doing the same for food wrappers and plastic bottles that were being woven into wallets or shredded and mixed with concrete into eco-

bricks, she said.

"Even during the campaign, we encouraged the candidates to not only [ask people to] vote for [them] but to also hold lectures and discussions on waste management and disaster preparedness," Sagenes said in a phone interview on Monday.

The city also encourages residents to collect plastic waste through its "BasuRaffle."

Under the program, residents get a raffle ticket for every kilogram of plastic trash turned over to the city government. The city holds a monthly raffle draw and gives away prizes like sacks of rice or rice cooker.

In 2018, Imus collected about 16 tons of plastic waste, a big part of the haul turned over to the recycling plant of the Villar Sipag foundation in Las Piñas City.

Sagenes said the materials were returned to Imus in the form of 300 armchairs, which local officials distributed to public schools. —MARICAR CINCO INQ

# NESTLÉ, VALENZUELA CITY UNVEIL CITYWIDE WASTE PLASTIC SACHET RECOVERY PROGRAM

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

The world is in the midst of a waste crisis brought about by the lack of recycling or processing infrastructure and systems to deal with our growing waste, a chunk of which is plastic. And the time to do something significant about it is now.

Which is why Nestlé Philippines and Valenzuela City have launched a citywide waste plastic sachet recovery program called *May BALIK! Sa PLASTIK!* to recover post-consumer waste laminates such as sachets and used beverage cartons (UBCs), collecting them for co-processing in cement kilns, or for recycling and upcycling.

The pilot program is expected to reduce the amount of post-consumer laminates that end up in the city's landfill. Once proven successful, the intent is to scale the program to extend to other locations in the country.

*May BALIK! Sa PLASTIK!* as a collaborative program includes the Department of Education (DepEd) Valenzuela Division and Green Antz Builders, Inc., with the participation of barangays and public schools citywide.

"Nestlé aims to achieve plastic neutrality. This means that we target the recovery of plastics equal to what we produce. This collaboration is one of the major steps we are taking to achieve this goal," said Kais Marzouki, chairman and CEO of Nestlé Philippines, "For us, plastics are still a very important component to deliver safe and high quality food, so while we are accelerating efforts to identify sustainable solutions, we want to help people find value in the plastic component of our products' packaging."

The program seeks to encourage individuals to recog-

nize value in waste laminates and UBCs, thereby promoting the collection of these materials. Under the program, students and street sweepers can exchange post-consumer laminates and UBCs with straws for school supplies or Nestlé products respectively. Designated booths in barangays and public schools will be set up as collection centers.

The residual plastic wastes gathered from collection booths will then be turned over to Green Antz Builders, Inc., a social enterprise that manufactures eco-bricks, a

more economical and stronger alternative to hollow blocks which incorporates used plastic laminates. A portion of the wastes will be used by Green Antz while the bulk will be delivered to Republic Cement, with which Nestlé has entered into an agreement for the co-processing of waste plastic laminates.

"This kind of program teaches people, especially children, that there is value in residual plastic wastes. This is important so we can change the culture, from just throwing away plastic to recycling or upcycling them instead," said Valenzuela Mayor Rexlon Gatchalian.

Valenzuela is a first-class city in Metro Manila, with 33 barangays and a total land area of 4,459 hectares. With an estimated population of 616,338 as of 2015, Valenzuela is the 13th most populous city in the country.

"In our city, we already have a system in place for larger waste plastic materials which are segregated and sold for extra income by our haulers. *May BALIK! Sa PLASTIK!* provides a solution for

what to do with smaller plastics, laminates, sachets," said Gatchalian.

Gatchalian and Marzouki recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the collaboration between the city and Nestlé Philippines. Also signing the MOU were Dr. Benjamin Samson, assistant schools division superintendent of DepEd Valenzuela City; and Rommel Benig, president of Green Antz Builders, Inc.

The *May BALIK! Sa PLASTIK!* laminate collection program will be formally

launched in June in celebration of Philippine Environment Month.

For Gatchalian, it's not about banning the use of plastics. More importantly, it's about repurposing them. This is especially true in Valenzuela City, where many locators are engaged in plastics manufacturing.

"This program shows that we don't always have to de-incentivize people for using plastic. Instead, we can incentivize them to repurpose residual plastics," the mayor said.

For Nestlé Philippines, tackling plastic pollution is of utmost importance and the company emphasizes its commitment to taking actions that make a significant difference everywhere it operates.

The *May BALIK! Sa PLASTIK!* program is in line with Nestlé's vision that none of its packaging, including plastics, end up in landfill or as litter. Globally, the company aims to make 100 percent of its packaging recyclable or reusable by 2025, focusing on three areas to drive change: designing the packaging of the future, shaping a waste-free future, and driving new behaviors.

Nestlé realizes it can only do so much on its own, and it is imperative for various sectors of society to collaborate in efforts to make a waste-free future possible. Thus, the program is a step in that direction.

Marzouki said: "The best thing about this program is that the approach involves the participation of various stakeholders. Our partnership with Valenzuela City, one of the most progressive cities in Metro Manila, is a milestone not only for us at Nestlé and Valenzuela City, but more importantly, for the environment."

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# Smart way to 'Love Boracay'



VERY  
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**E**VERYBODY now talks about sustainable tourism, but for the '90s teen star **Antoinette Taus**, talking about it isn't just enough.

In an exclusive interview with the singer-actress, she shared what makes her feel driven and why, after her showbiz hiatus, she decided to take a different route, which is far from what she's used to, and perhaps comfortable with.

According to Antoinette, it's not enough for you to just talk about environmental concerns, you really have to take part in initiatives that promote environmental protection or join in community driven conservation projects that will allow you to make solid efforts since it will enable you to get closer to people and help them be more informed about the ills of our environment and what they can do to help.

"You can also learn new things from that. It's amazing to see the world in a different perspective. You don't have to be an expert or a scientist. Everyone has the capacity to make a change," she pointed out.

Antoinette, along with actors **Rocco Nacino**, **Victor Basa**, and some digital personalities, took part in a weeklong event in Boracay. Called Smart Love Boracay, it's the telco's effort to support sustainable tourism in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Interior and Local Government, the Provincial Government of Aklan and the local government of Malay.

"The last time I was here, that's before the closure, we did coastal cleanup that's why seeing Boracay this beautiful and clean after the rehabilitation, it feels really inspiring especially to those people who really care about the environment," she shared.

## LaBoracay is out, Love Boracay is in

The Smart Love Boracay event ran from April 26 to May 1. Instead of the usual Labor Day parties that the island was known for, "Love Boracay" aims to celebrate the tourist destination's reopening and to promote environmental awareness among visitors.

The week-long celebration featured a beach clean-up activity, as well as talks and activities on sustainable tourism.

Street parties, parades, and the week-long Boracay Food Fest also aimed to highlight the artistry and creativity of Boracay's local artists and businesses.

"I'm glad that I was invited to be part of this meaningful event. Our group was launched here two years ago. And we're here again celebrating our second year so everything seems so serendipitous," she beamed.

Antoinette founded Cora and Planet Cora, two foundations she named after her mom.

"Cora is for our humanitarian efforts and Planet Cora is for our environmental activities. We work with the UN, the DENR, and local government units. We're the partner of NatGeo Earth Day Run. And hopefully we could do more things like that," Antoinette said.

Spearheading environmental activities was never her plan. In fact, Antoinette thought she would be singing, dancing, and acting all her life.

"I'm trying to focus on work close to my advocacy, things I really care about. After my mom died, I realized I can still do a lot. When you are doing something for so long, you'd think that it's what you're supposed to do for the rest of your life. But I'm in this phase in

my life that I do things because it wasn't forced. It's like I found a new happiness and passion."

Her foundation was inspired by social media posts. It started out with her friends. In the beginning, they would just post something on social media to get people's attention on the efforts that they do and the activities they support.

"That's why we also advocate good use

of social media. I know it can be toxic but it really depends on the way you use it," she said.

## LTE network coverage in Boracay

Smart Love Boracay event also saw the use of social media in spreading the good news about the island. And it was high time for the tourists and residents of the newly rehabilitated tourist spot experience the improved connectivity on

the island as PLDT wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. (Smart) boosts and expands its network to support sustainable tourism.

The wireless connectivity expansion was launch during Smart Love Boracay festival. To date, Smart has already deployed Long Term Evolution technology to 83 percent of its Boracay sites. Of these LTE sites, 80 percent have been further

upgraded to LTE-Advanced, which gives customers an even faster mobile data experience for better video viewing and mobile gaming, for example.

Smart is also set to expand its LTE coverage and capacity across the island to better serve beachfront hotels and restaurants in the Philippines' premier tourist destination.

"Through our continuing network upgrade efforts across the country, we are empowering tourists, residents and local businesses alike by providing them with quality connectivity wherever they may be," said **Mario G. Tamayo**, PLDT and Smart senior vice president for Network Planning and Engineering.



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**BEAUTIFUL PLANETEER.** '905 teen star Antoinette Taus thought she'd be doing entertainment—dancing, singing, and acting—for the rest of her life until she started getting involved in well-meaning causes that concern the environment.

“With our expanded networks, tourists can share the beauty of Boracay to the world, enjoy a better video streaming and mobile gaming experience, as well as access key online services like banking and e-commerce while on the island,” said Tamayo.

“Local entrepreneurs can also leverage social media to boost their respective businesses now that Boracay has been reopened to tourists,” Tamayo said, adding that with better connectivity, searching and booking restaurants, hotels and other activities online are just a tap away.

#### First in LTE

Boracay was the site of several technological firsts for Smart as well as the Philippines, including the firing up of LTE in 2012 and the deployment of LTE-A in 2016, in anticipation of the rise of bandwidth-heavy services such as video streaming and gaming.

Today, about 70 percent of Smart's LTE sites across the country are already on LTE-A, including major towns and cities like Paoay in Ilocos Norte, Baguio in Benguet, San Fernando in Pampanga, Calamba in Laguna, Antipolo in Rizal, Puerto Princesa in Palawan, Naga in Camarines Sur, San Jose in Antique, Bacolod in Negros Occidental, Tagbilaran in Bohol, Lapu-Lapu in Cebu, Ormoc in Leyte, Dipolog in Zamboanga del Norte, Koronadal in South Cotabato and Davao City, to name a few.

As of end-2018, Smart has increased the number of LTE base stations nationwide by over 86 percent year-on-year to about 16,200, while the number of 3G base stations also increased by 17 percent to about 11,500. This massive deployment has enabled Smart to provide mobile broadband in at least 90 percent of the country's cities and municipalities.

PLDT's expansive fiber network, now at over 244,000 kilometers, also supports Smart's mobile network by providing high-capacity links to cellular base stations.

PLDT and Smart are undertaking another massive capital expenditures program for 2019 by allocating up to P78.4 billion budget this year, P20 billion higher than the previous year, to push further the companies' already significant network advantage.



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Antoinette (center) with Victor Basa (rightmost) and other digital personalities who participated in a beach clean-up activity during the week-long Smart Love Boracay event.



The singer-actress participated in "Love Boracay," which aims to celebrate the tourist destination's reopening and to promote environmental awareness among tourists.



Apart from a beach clean-up activity, street parties, parades, and food fest also aimed to highlight the artistry and creativity of Boracay's local artists and businesses.



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# MERCURY RISING

...could be the downfall of us all

A recent headline of a national daily said that mercury levels are rising in Philippine waters and mine sites. Why is mercury a big concern?—*elena\_indaal@gmail.com*

At least five bodies of water in Luzon and Mindanao and several mining sites all over the country have rising levels of mercury, according to the Philippine Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) report, which studied the prevalence of mercury in our country.

The bodies of water and sites suspected to have high concentrations of mercury include Manila Bay in Metro Manila, Meycauayan River in Bulacan, Mambulao Bay in Camarines Norte, Lumanggang Creek, and Naboc River, both in Davao region, the abandoned Palawan Quicksilver

Mines in Puerto Princesa City, Mabay Vinyl Corp. in Iligan City, a chlor-alkali producer, and mining and gold processing sites in Camarines Norte and Masbate.

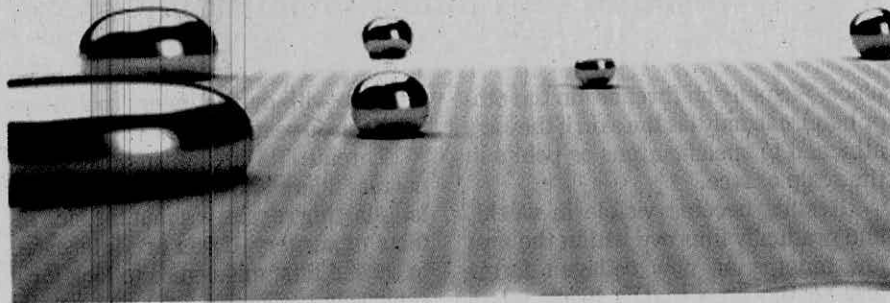
Mercury, or "asoge," in Filipino, is a naturally occurring heavy metal that is of great concern because it is toxic. Experts say there is no safe level of mercury in humans and the World Health Organization (WHO) considers mercury as one of top 10 chemicals of major public health concern.



MEDICAL NOTES  
**EDUARDO  
GONZALES, MD**

## MERCURY USE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Before its harmful effects became widely understood, mercury was extensively employed for medical purposes. It used to be a component of many medical diagnostic equipment includ-





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ing blood pressure apparatuses and clinical thermometers, some drugs, and antiseptic agents—remember mercurochrome, a topical antiseptic used for minor cuts and abrasions?

Mercury is no longer used in the medical and dental fields in the Philippines. Mercury-containing equipment were phased out from medical facilities in the country in 2010 in compliance with a Department of Health (DOH) directive. Mercury, however, is

small droplets and inhaled, as when spilled mercury is vacuumed up from the floor, health problems can arise. Inhaled elemental mercury can cause vomiting, difficulty of breathing, cough, metallic taste, and bleeding and swollen gums. Depending on the amount of mercury inhaled, permanent lung damage and death can occur.

Organic mercury, on the other hand, as exemplified by methyl mercury, the form of the metal that is found in our

wombs of mothers with high blood level of mercury), infants, and children, it impairs brain development.

According to the MIA, methyl mercury in our waters comes from landfills, waste water treatment, coal burning power plants (coal contains mercury as a natural contaminant), and metal production.

Methyl mercury in our waters is absorbed by algae, the staple food of small fish that scavenge near shorelines. The level of mercury among fish gets higher as one goes up the food chain because small fish are eaten by larger fish which, in turn, serve as prey for still larger fish.

In short, we can get mercury poisoning when we consume mercury-contaminated fish.

Fortunately, at present, most of our saltwater and freshwater fish contain only minute levels of mercury, which means mercury contamination of our waters is not a serious problem yet, but unless a comprehensive regulatory system for mercury, from its acquisition to its disposal, is put in place, it might soon be.

In any case, there are large fish such as sharks, tilefish, swordfish, and king mackerels that sometimes already contain dangerously high levels of mercury in their tissues. We should consume these fish in moderation.

(Note: Email inquiries on health matters to: [medical\\_notes2@yahoo.com](mailto:medical_notes2@yahoo.com))

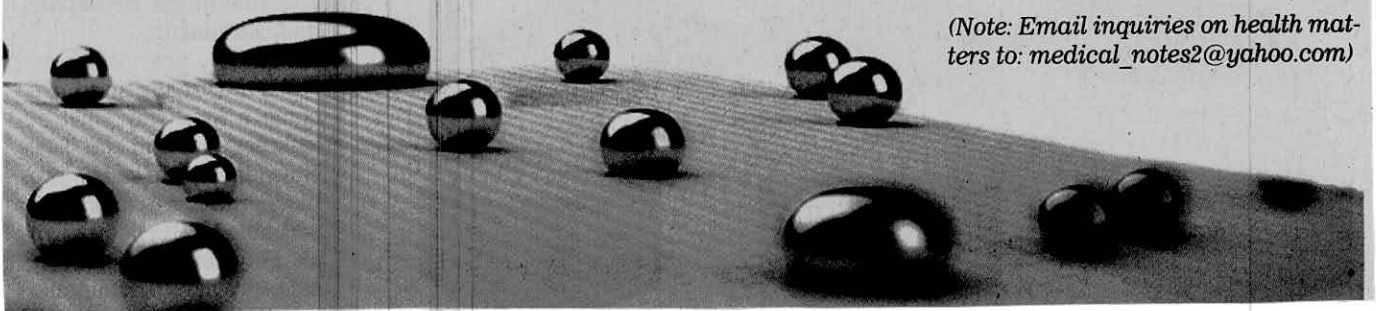
## When made airborne into small droplets and inhaled, as when spilled mercury is vacuumed up from the floor, health problems can arise.

still widely used, in its inorganic and organic forms in many industries.

### TOXIC EFFECTS OF MERCURY

Elemental mercury, the form of inorganic mercury that was used in clinical thermometers, is harmless if touched or swallowed. It is so thick and slippery that it falls off the skin or egested by our digestive tract without being absorbed. When made airborne into

bodies of water, is dangerous when breathed in, eaten, or absorbed through the skin, for long periods of time. It results in gradual damage to the lungs, kidney, and brain that manifests as difficulty of breathing, kidney failure, numbness and pain in certain parts of the skin, uncontrollable shaking or tremor, inability to walk well or to swallow, blindness and double vision, memory problems, seizures, and death. In fetuses (in





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## DMCI Mining more than doubles nickel ore shipments

DMCI Mining Corp. recorded a 118% increase in nickel ore shipments in the first quarter of 2019.

In a disclosure on Monday, DMCI Holdings said its mining unit more than doubled its nickel ore shipments to 338,000 wet metric tons (WMT) in the January to March period, from 156,000 WMT shipped a year ago.

"We had a good first quarter but we do not see this holding up for the rest of the year due to a number of factors, such as

weak market prices, peso appreciation versus the US dollar and our dwindling nickel reserves in Berong's active mine sites," Cesar F. Simbulan, Jr., president of DMCI Mining, said in a statement.

DMCI Mining said the shipments came from Berong Nickel Corp. (BNC), which has a nickel mining site in Barangay Berong, Palawan. Another unit Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. (ZDMC) is still suspended by the Department of Environ-

ment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The company noted average nickel grade fell to 1.59% in the first quarter, from 1.70% during the same period last year, as BNC's shipments included middle-grade ore (1.50%). It said that nickel prices also continue to drop, bringing the average selling price 25% lower to \$29.

DMCI Mining said that it expects a "tough" year ahead as its inventory will soon run out given the current situation of its Zambales plant.

BNC has an estimated nickel reserve of around 710,000 tons in its active mining sites. In December 2018, it was the only company that passed DENR's two-year review.

"We hope that with BNC's track record as a responsible miner, it will be allowed to operate in other areas so we can continue providing livelihood and employment opportunities in our host communities," he said.

Shares in DMCI Holdings inched up 0.38% to P10.62 each on Monday. — **V.M.P. Galang**





## DMCI Mining shipments double in Q1

**D**MCI Mining Corp. shipped 338,000 wet metric tons of nickel ore in the first quarter, more than double the 156,000 WMT it shipped during the same period last year.

All of the shipments came from Berong Nickel Corp. in Palawan, as the operations of its other nickel asset, Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., remains suspended by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Average nickel grade from January to March declined from 1.7 percent to 1.59 percent as Berong shifted its shipments to include middle-grade ore (1.5 percent). This, coupled with falling nickel prices, pushed DMCI Mining's average selling price to drop 25

percent year-on-year from \$38 to \$29. "We had a good first quarter, but we do not see this holding up for the rest of the year due to a number of factors, such as weak market prices, peso appreciation versus the US dollar and our dwindling nickel reserves in Berong's active mine sites," DMCI Mining President Cesar F. Simbulan Jr. said.

Berong estimates its nickel reserves in its active mine sites to be around 710,000 tons.

"We hope that with BNC's track record as a responsible miner, it will be allowed to operate in other areas so we can continue providing livelihood and employment opportunities in our host communities," Simbulan said.

In December last year, Berong

was the only mining company audited by DENR which passed the nearly two-year review. Of the 13 companies audited, three were ordered closed while nine remained suspended, pending the implementation of certain DENR conditions.

The mine directly and indirectly employs 541 people from Barangay Berong and nearby communities. At the height of its operations, the company had a total work force of 925.

On a stand-alone basis, DMCI Mining's first-quarter revenue grew 63 percent to P501 million from P308 million while net income jumped 167 percent to P144 million from P54 million due to the cost-containment measures employed by the company. **VG Cabuag**



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## DMCI Mining hikes nickel ore shipments

DMCI Mining Corp., a unit of conglomerate DMCI Holdings Inc., shipped 338,000 wet metric tons of nickel ore in the first quarter of 2019, up 118 percent from 156,000 tons year-on-year.

DMCI Mining said in a statement all shipments came from Berong Nickel Corp. Its other nickel asset, Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., remains suspended by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The average nickel grade declined from 1.70 percent to 1.59 percent in the first quarter of the year as BNC shifted shipments to include middle-grade ore.

"We had a good first quarter but we do not see this holding up for the rest of the year due to a number of factors, such as weak market prices, peso appreciation versus the US dollar and our dwindling nickel reserves in Berong's active mine sites," said DMCI Mining president Cesar Simbulan Jr. **Jennifer B. Austria**



## DMCI Mining shipment doubles

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to 1.59 percent nickel content, from 1.70 percent, as BNC shifted its shipments to include middle-grade ore (1.50 percent).

"This, coupled with falling nickel prices, pushed DMCI Mining's average selling price to drop 25 percent year-on-year from \$38 to \$29," it said.

"We had a good first quarter but we do not see this holding up for the rest of the year due to a number of factors, such as weak market prices, peso appreciation versus the US dollar and our dwindling nickel reserves in Berong's

active mine sites," said Cesar Simbulan Jr., DMCI Mining president.

Simbulan said BNC estimates its nickel reserves in its active mine sites to be around 710,000 tons.

"We hope that with BNC's track record as a responsible miner, it will be allowed to operate in other areas so we can continue providing livelihood and employment opportunities in our host communities," he added.

In December 2018, BNC was the only mining company audited by DENR which passed the nearly two-year review.



## POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

### 'Duterte live' wows 'em in Tokyo forum

IT COULD be discomfiting to see President Duterte being handed a note to conclude his speech at the Nikkei international conference in Japan last Friday, but viewing the entire episode up to his final "arigato" put it in favorable enough context.



Duterte overshot his allotted time because he had to insert into the prepared text his strong opinion that climate change was being largely ignored, the US-China rivalry was making the region a flashpoint, and the narcotics scourge was devouring this country.

As he tackled those topics, the audience that included officials and academicians got a sample of how Duterte of the Philippines thinks and talks in a borrowed tongue. As he ad-libbed, accent and all, the crowd occasionally laughed and clapped while experiencing the authentic Duterte live.

Our guess is that while his digressions gave his long-time critics more ammunition to ridicule him, his first-time listeners had a memorable exposure to the mayor-turned-president who shook traditional politics with his populist rhetoric and his mailed-fist handling of stubborn problems.

At that forum on "The Future of Asia," Duterte drew attention to the plight of developing countries bedeviled by the effects of climate change. Despite conferences all over the planet, with speakers adding to the air pollution, the big offenders have not acted aggressively to slow down global warming.

Even President Trump then campaigning for the White House made light of climate change as nothing but a Chinese invention. Duterte didn't report that, the news agencies did.

At least Foreign Secretary Teddy Locsin Jr. was more positive, saying tongue in cheek that with the melting of the polar caps, sea levels would rise and submerge the artificial isles that China had built in Philippine waters.

No, Duterte did not quote his foreign secretary's tweet. But he did mention his firing a Cabinet official who wasted official time and funds by attending as many as 20 climate change conferences without her junkets contributing to changing the climate.

Sad to say, while industrialized countries have achieved their present level of development by generating power that released massive pollutants destroying the ozone layer, they now want developing nations not to follow their pollutive example.

Duterte noted that the United States itself does not want to sign the Global Warming Convention, that China has withdrawn its signature, and that Russia has been temporizing on it – while fledgling economies are being pressured to subscribe to it.

This is not fair, Duterte said, adding that there should be accountability – with the burgeoning economies that had contributed the most to global warming accepting greater responsibility instead of shifting the burden to up-and-coming economies.

He recalled mentioning to United Nations Secretary General António Guterres the consequence of such all-talk and no-action, giving the example of the Philippines as a victim. Its east side facing the Pacific, the archipelago is hit too often by typhoons that exact a heavy toll in lives and property lost.

But with death and destruction possibly resulting from a miscalculation – as in the case of war – in the ongoing Big Power rivalry in the region, he said climate change would no longer matter. War would so destroy the world that food production would become unsustainable, he noted.



# New metro mayors urged to set up bicycle lanes

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

An international think tank yesterday issued a challenge to Metro Manila's newly elected young mayors, calling for working class-biased solutions to climate change in celebration of World Bicycle Day.

"We call on Metro Manila's new leaders to come together and make every day a 'World Bicycle Day.' It's time they work as one to focus on non-motorized transport options

and promote cities friendly to those who pedal to work," said Golda Hilario, associate for program development of the Manila-based Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC).

ICSC is an international climate and energy policy group promoting climate-resilient and low carbon development.

It called on Mayors Joy Belmonte, Vico Sotto, Abby Binay, Isko Moreno and Francis Zamora to pin down a plan of

cooperation that would link their respective cities – Quezon, Pasig, Makati, Manila and San Juan – through protected bicycle lanes.

"We challenge our incoming mayors in Metro Manila to build better communities and improve productivity by making cycling a real, safe transport choice for everyone. They should work together to make the metro's bike networks connected and functional, especially for blue collar workers

who build and run our city," said Aldrin Pelicano, an urban planner and daily bike commuter who runs the Facebook page Manila Moves.

ICSC was a participant to the second "World Bike to Work Day" organized by Manila Moves in Ortigas in cooperation with the Pasig City government's transport office, Cycling Matters, Tiklop Society of the Philippines, Ortigas Center and Tern Bicycles.

"What is good for local air

quality, local tourism and workers' health has global benefits as well. Cities represent over 70 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions," Hilario said.

The organization also supports the leadership of Joey Salceda, returning congressman of Albay's second district, who called for a halt to the EDSA provincial bus ban. According to Salceda, only 3,300 provincial buses pass through EDSA daily compared to over 247,000 private vehicles, based on the Met-

ropolitan Manila Development Authority's 2017 estimates.

"Imagine if commuters from the provinces enjoyed cycling options too, once they reach the metropolis. We promote productivity when we reduce travel time and when workers enjoy cleaner air," Hilario said.

Other groups and local governments also organized World Bicycle Day activities in Alabang, Baguio, Camarines Sur and Borongan City in Eastern Samar, according to reports.