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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



ISINAGAWANG PAG-AARAL SA MANILA BAY REHAB NATUKOY AT IPATUTUPAD NG DENR

UPANG maging matagumpay ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay, kinakailangan na palakasin ang pagpapatupad ng solid waste management program, higitan ang pagbabantay sa mga pabrikang nagtatapon ng dumi sa tubig at ang pagkakaroon ng reforestation ng watershed at mangrove areas.

Ito ang lumabas sa isinagawang vulnerability assessment study sa Manila Bay rehabilitation na pinangasiwaan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, sa pamamagitan ng isinagawang pag-aaral ay madaling matutukoy ng gobyerno at ng iba pang stakeholders ang mga dapat tutukan sa isinasagawang rehabilitasyon.

Aniya, sa pamamagitan ng pag-aaral na ito na pinaangunahan ng Ecosystems Research and Development

Bureau (ERDB) ng DENR, agad na matutukoy kung ano ang mga dapat gawin para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

"We at the DENR believe that by investing in studies such as this, we would be able to find better solutions in solving not only the problem in Manila Bay, but also other issues within our mandate," sabi pa ni Cimatu.

Ibinahagi ni ERDB supervising science research specialist Jose Isidro Michael Padin ang resulta ng Manila Bay Vulnerability Assessment sa ginanap na kauna-unahang Annual Technical Seminar ng ahensya na idinaos noong Hunyo 17.

Ayon kay Padin na naging tagapagsalita ng kanilang team leader na si Dr. Carmelita Villamor, kinakailangang magkaroon ng mas maraming materials recovery facilities (MRFs) sa tatlong rehiyon na nakakasakop sa Manila Bay para sa tamang pag-

tatapon ng basura.

"Government agencies must uphold stricter implementation of solid waste management programs not just in the coastal areas of the bay, but for the entire Manila Bay watershed as there is little or no active public participation in source reduction and segregation activities among local government units," pagdidiin pa ni Padin.

Aniya, kinakailangang palaging bantayan ang mga industrial and commercial establishments upang matiyak na sumusunod ang mga ito sa umiiral na batas tungkol sa tamang pagtatapon ng basura.

Sinabi pa ni Padin na kailangang tutukan ang natitirang ecosystems partikular ang sa kanlurang bahagi ng Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng reforestation.

"Reforestation of abandoned fishponds and sparsely vegetated mangrove forest can be done, alongside

proper maintenance and protection of remaining mangrove stands," sabi ni ni Padin.

"Reforestation alongside infrastructure development for disaster risk reduction and management is needed to protect the climate vulnerable communities from flooding and storm surges," dagdag pa nito.

Natuklasan ng ERDB na karamihan sa coral ecosystems sa Manila Bay region ay buhay pa sa kabila ng environmental and human pressures.

Karamihan sa natagpuang coral ay nasa Maragondon at Temate sa Cavite at sa mga isla ng Corregidor at Caballo.

Sinabi pa ni Cimatu, malaki ang pag-asa na maibalik sa dali ang ganda at linis ng Manila Bay dahil sa natuklasang live coral cover.

Dahil dito, lalong nagkaroon ng dahilan ang gobyerno at ang mga stakeholders na ipagpatuloy ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon.



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG



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4th Manila Bay Clean-Up run slated

MANILA Broadcasting Company will mount the fourth Manila Bay Clean-Up Run on July 7.

The event is open to all interested participants and will feature races in the 3K, 5K, 10K, and 21K divisions for both men and women. Medals and cash prizes will be given to the top three winners in each division.

Interested runners can register at the lobby of the Manila Broadcasting Company, Sotto Street, CCP Complex, Pasay City, daily from 9 a.m. to 6 pm. Registration will also be accepted at Olympic

Village branches at Robinsons Forum, Festival Mall, and Farmers Plaza from noon to 6 p.m. Registration ends June 30.

MBC volunteers have joined their counterparts from other establishments based on Roxas Blvd. for Land Bank's Manila Bay Clean-Up Program since 2009.

The fun run is one of many activities that have helped generate funds to institute systematic long-term solutions to environmental sanitation problems besetting the country's coastal resources and tributaries.



Magparehistro na sa Manila Bay Clean-up run

SINIMULAN na ng **Manila Broadcasting Company** ang pagparehistro para sa ika-apat na **Manila Bay Clean-Up Run** sa ika-17 ng Hulyo 2019.

Ito'y bukas sa lahat ng interesadong tumakbo sa 3K, 5K, 10K, at 21K dibisyon na panlalaki at pambabae. Magkakamit ng medalya at cash prizes ang magwawagi sa bawat kategoriya.

Bukas ang registration center sa MBC lobby, Sotto Street, CCP Complex, Pasay City araw-araw mula alas-9 ng umaga hanggang alas-6 ng gabi. Maari

ding magpatala sa Olympic Village Robinsons Forum, Festival Mall, at Farmers Plaza, mula alas-12 ng tanghali hanggang alas-6 ng gabi. Huling araw ng rehistro ay sa June 30, 2019.

Patuloy na tumutugon ang MBC at iba pang mga establisimiyento sa kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard sa panawagan ng Land Bank na maibsan ang basura at linisin hindi lamang ang karagatan kungdi maging mga ilog, estero, at iba pa'ng maliit na daluyan ng tubig na karugtong nito. Ang fun run ay isa lamang sa mga proyektong na-



kakapag-ambag ng pondong kailangan sa pagpapatupad ng mga pangangailangan ng programa.

Para sa karagdagang

kaalaman tungkol sa Manila Bay Clean Up Run, maaring tawagan ang Runners Link sa telepono bilang

0926.205.2787



Editorial

Baha na naman dahil sa basura

BALIK na naman sa dating problema ang Metro Manila --- nagkalat na basura na dahilan nang pagbaha. Lumang problema na ito at hanggang ngayon ay hindi pa masolusyunan. Wala pa ring makapagpatino o makapagdisiplina sa mga taong nang tapon ng kanilang basura. Ang mga basurang itinapon sa estero, creek at ilog, ibinalik din at humantong sa kalsada. Namumulaklak ang kalsada sa mga plastic na basura. Ang ibang basura nanatili sa mga estero dahil para lalong walang madaanan ang tubig-baha. Mayroon din namang inanod patungo sa Manila Bay. Pero kapag nagsugit ang panahon, ang mga basurang nasa Manila Bay, ibabalik din ng alon sa Roxas Boulevard.

Nang umulan noong Linggo ng madaling araw, maraming lugar sa Metro Manila ang binaha. Binaha ang Espana Blvd., Araneta Avenue, Quezon Avenue, Recto at Rizal Avenues at pati EDSA ay binaha na rin. Ang baha ay nagdulot ng grabeng trapik sa EDSA at Espana Blvd. Marami ang nabigla sa biglang pagbaha sa EDSA partikular sa mga tunnel sa Cubao area. At napag-alaman na kaya nagbaha sa mga nasabing lugar, dahil sa mga nakabarang basura sa daanan ng tubig. Dahil maraming basura ang nasa waterways, naipon ang tubig at umabot umano hanggang dibdib. Kahit may pumping station sa lugar hindi umubra sa dami ng mga nakabarang basura.

Ayon sa Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), bukod sa mga plastic na supot, marami ring dahon ng punongkahoy ang nakabara sa daanan ng tubig. Ayon sa MMDA, pinakamaraming nakuhang plastic na supot at mga dahon sa tapat ng Camp Aguinaldo kung saan malalim ang baha.

Kamakalawa, umulan na naman nang malakas at muli na namang bumaha sa Maynila at Quezon City. At gaya ng dati, basura na naman ang nakitang dahilan kaya bumaha. Barado ng basura ang mga daanan ng tubig kaya nagkaroon ng pagbaha. Bukod sa plastic na supot, marami ring sachet ng shampoo, coffee, cup ng noodles at iba pa ang nakabara.

Kailan magkakaroon ng disiplina sa pagtatapon ng basura ang mamamayan? Laging panawagan na isaayos ang pagtatapon ng basura pero walang nakikinig. Tapon dito, tapon doon ang ginagawa ng mga nakatira sa tabing estero o ilog. Kung hindi mapipigil ang mga ito sa pagtatapon ng basura, asahan na ang pagbaha sa mga darating pang panahon.



DON'T BUY 'FORCE MAJEURE' EXCUSE, MWSS TOLD

STIFFER FINES SOUGHT FOR CONCESSIONAIRES OVER METRO WATER SHORTAGE

Melvin Gascon
nelvingasconINQ

Harsher penalties must be imposed on the water concessionaires because the shortage in Metro Manila is due to their incompetence and greed, Gabriela Rep. Arlene Brosas said on Wednesday.

Brosas dismissed the claim of Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. that the shortage was due to "force majeure," or an uncontrollable event, as just an alibi.

"The MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System) as the regulating body should not buy the alibi of the two private water concessionaires in their attempt to escape liability [for] the suffering of waterless households," Brosas said in a statement.

Manila Water rebate

The MWSS was expected to tackle the concessionaires' force majeure petition on Wednesday as the regulator opened an inquiry into service

interruptions that had been inconveniencing Metro Manilans since March.

Taps in the east zone of the metropolis went dry in March when the reserve in La Mesa Dam dropped below the critical level, catching the concessionaire in the area, Manila Water, unprepared.

The MWSS fined Manila Water P534 million for failing to provide 24-hour service to its customers for 15 days. The fine came in the form of a rebate to customers, reflected on their bills for June.

This time, Brosas wants Maynilad penalized as well, because the shortage has extended to the west zone of the metropolis, and that the penalties be heavier than the fine slapped on Manila Water for its March failure.

"The rebates should be doubled or even tripled in the coming months until such time that water supply is brought back to normal levels," she said.

The reserve in Angat Dam in Bulacan province, which supplies

97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs, has been dipping to precarious levels in recent days because of the lack of rain.

At a hearing in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, National Water Resources

Board Executive Director Sevillo David warned that the Angat stock might drop again to its lowest mark of 157 meters above sea level (masl) this weekend, meaning longer service interruptions in Metro Manila.

As of Wednesday morning, the Angat reserve stood at 158.37 masl, way below the minimum operating level of 180 masl.

Brosas said the contracts of Manila Water and Maynilad let them off only in times of war,

drought or severe calamities.

She said the current crisis should not be used to push for the construction of the China-financed Kaliwa Dam in Quezon province.

MWSS maneuver

"This is an obvious maneuver by the MWSS to justify the supposed need for the Kaliwa Dam to solve the water crisis. But are we not surprised that [the] government is announcing the water shortage at Angat Dam despite the construction of several treatment plants and the onset of the rainy season?" Brosas said.

She said the privatization of the water service in the metropolis should be reversed by the government by taking over Maynilad and Manila Water.

The militant group Bayan Muna has also called for "rationalization" of the water service, which Malacañang has said is an option for the government in the search for solutions to the water woes of the metropolis. INQ



PRECIOUS FLOW Metro Manila residents have been reeling from the water shortage for the past several weeks as the reserve in Angat Dam in Bulacan province dipped to precarious levels because of lack of rain. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE



NWRB braces for Angat Dam hitting lowest level

BY VICTOR REYES

THE National Water Resources Board yesterday implied further reduction in water supply for Metro Manila as it braced for Angat Dam hitting its lowest water level in the coming days.

In an interview with CNN Philippines, NWRB executive director Sevilla David Jr. said Angat's water level stood at 158.4 meters as of yesterday, down by .37 meters from the previous day. Angat is the major source of Metro Manila's water needs.

"So we are now a little around one meter less, one meter away from the lowest record," said David.

Angat recorded its lowest mark of 157.56 meters in July 2010 when the country encountered a similar

El Niño phenomenon.

"Considering that right now, the decline of the level in Angat Dam is around .35 to .4 meters per day, we might be reaching that said (lowest) elevation in the next couple of days or before this weekend. We might be lower than that," said David.

Water concessionaires implemented wider and longer water service interruptions on Saturday after the NWRB reduced water allocation to 36 cubic meters per second from 40 cms.

Asked what the NWRB will do in the event Angat Dam records a new lowest water level, David said: "What we will do is we will further review the current level."

He added they will assess climate

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NWRB

projections from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration in the couple of days and the coming month, which he said are "very important...very crucial."

If that time comes, David said: "Then we have to manage it (water supply) in such a way that it will reach until such time that rainfall will be significantly coming in the Angat watershed."

PAGASA hydrologist Elmer Caringal said Angat Dam's operational level of 180 meters may be back in August or September with the anticipated arrival of two to three typhoons.

Caringal said the recent rains caused by the southwest monsoon

were not enough to cause water level at Angat to rise.

"It depends on the amount of rainfall they (typhoons) will be bringing. If the two to three typhoons will bring enough rainfall, by August or September we'll be back at the operational level of 180 meters," Caringal said.

Asked if the rotational water interruptions will end once the dam is back to its operational level, David said: "That is what we wanted to do but of course we wanted to manage also the dam and the requirements of our consumers in Metro Manila for the rest of the year."

"We cannot just bring the allocation to normal and then at the end of the year, we're back again to the same situation," he said.



Angat nears lowest level in 14 years

By HELEN FLORES

Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan, the main source of potable water of Metro Manila residents, is close to breaking its lowest level record in 14 years, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

PAGASA hydrologist Sonia Serrano said as of 6 a.m. yesterday, the water level at An-

gat had dipped further to 158.40 meters.

The dam's water supply hit its lowest at 157.56 meters on July 18, 2010, according to Serrano, citing data from 2006 to 2019.

"Angat needs 365 millimeters of rain to reach its normal operating level of 180 meters," she said.

To reach the normal high water level of 210 meters, the dam needs 1,300 mm of rain.

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Angat

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PAGASA weather division chief Esperanza Cayanan said the enhancement of the southwest monsoon by Tropical Depression Dodong has so far not benefited Angat Dam.

Cayanan explained the heavy rains from the southwest monsoon were not reaching Norzagaray, which is located on the eastern side of Central Luzon, as the concentration of rains is in the western section.

Cayanan added that the brewing cyclone spotted east of Mindanao may dump more rains over Angat.

"We expect the developing weather disturbance to pass near Luzon area," she said.

PAGASA said two to three cyclones are predicted to enter the country next month.

Cayanan had earlier said Angat could return to its normal level by July and August, when above normal rainfall is expected to prevail over Western Luzon.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has reduced water allocation in Metro Manila and nearby areas as Angat breached its 160-meter critical level last week.

PAGASA deputy administrator Landrico Dalida Jr. has urged the public to collect rain-

water to cope with the ongoing water interruptions.

Enough water but...

The NWRB assured the public that there is still enough water at Angat Dam but maintained that rotational water service interruptions must still be implemented to manage the supply until the full onset of the rainy season.

"We would like to tell the public that there is still water at Angat Dam. But we continue to implement water service interruptions in order for the supply to last until the rainy season... What we are doing is we are managing the supply," NWRB Legal Unit head Archie Asuncion said in Filipino during his interview with "The chiefs" aired on Cignal TV's *One News* last Tuesday night.

Asuncion said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), together with its two concessionaires Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc., has already operationalized Angat Dam's low-level outlet (LLO), the bottom channel of the dam, capable of releasing water below 160 meters.

Asuncion added that the LLO is ready to release supply once the water level at Angat Dam dips further.

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Angat

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As of Tuesday, NWRB executive director Sevillo David Jr. reported at the hearing at the House of Representatives that water level at Angat Dam was at 158.8 meters, or more than a meter below critical level.

"The LLO's elevation is at 101 meters. Right now, the water level is at 158 meters. That means there is still enough water. But we need to manage it to even out the supply to all areas," Asuncion said.

During the House hearing, David admitted that the daily water service interruption may last until August.

Meanwhile, NWRB Policy

and Program Division chief Susan Abaño warned that the board may further reduce the water allocation of MWSS if water level at Angat Dam continues to decrease.

From 46 cubic meters per second, the NWRB reduced the water allocation of MWSS to 40 CMS and eventually to 36 CMS after the level at Angat Dam dipped below 160 meters.

Abaño, nonetheless, said the Board is planning to tap water from Marikina River, Laguna Lake, as well as other water sources from the provinces of Bulacan, Laguna and Cavite. — With Elizabeth Marcelo, Rhodina Villanueva



Angat Dam nears record low level

BY JORDEENE B. LAGARE

IF no significant amount of rain will fall on Angat Dam this week, the reservoir's water level is expected to hit a record low on Saturday, according to the National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

The dam's lowest level was recorded in July 2010 at 157.57 meters.

On Wednesday morning, the dam's water level was 158.4 meters.

"If the situation continues, we are expecting the level of the Angat Dam to breach the lowest recorded

of 157.57 [meters] by end of this week, most likely Saturday," NWRB Executive Director Sevilla David Jr. said in a briefing.

"It is continuously going down without any significant rainfall flowing into the Angat Watershed," he told reporters.

Tropical Depression Dodong

might have brought downpours in Metro Manila and other areas in Luzon, but the dam did not receive enough rain to elevate its water level.

Angat Dam is the primary source of water in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Despite the dam's dwindling water, David said the NWRB would no longer reduce the water allocation for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), which is 36 cubic meters per second (cms).

"[The] NWRB decided to maintain the current allocation of 36 cubic meters per second for the rest of June. Then, for July, [we]

will be deciding [whether or not] to continue that," he said.

The NWRB lowered the MWSS' water allocation from 40 cms to 36 cms. The water allocation is shared between Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the Angat Watershed got only 118 millimeters of rainfall from June 1 to 25.

Analiza Solis, Pagasa's chief of climate monitoring and prediction section, said that comprises only 36 percent of the normal rainfall of 332.4 millimeters the dam should receive.



Angat expected to breach all-time low by Saturday, water regulator says

says

WITHOUT significant rainfall flowing to its watershed, Angat Dam is expected to breach the lowest recorded level of 157.57 meters by Saturday according to the National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

NWRB Executive Director Seville D. David, Jr. said at a briefing: "If the situation continues we are expecting the level of the Angat Dam to breach the lowest recorded level of 157.57 (meters) by end of this week," Mr. David said.

At 6 a.m. on Wednesday, Angat Dam was at 158.4 meters, 21.6 meters below its rated minimum operating level of 180 meters. The latest level is 0.8 meters away from the lowest recorded level of 157.57 meters on July 13, 2010.

The NWRB also decided to maintain the current allocation of 36 cubic meters per second to concessionaires for the rest of June up to the first week of July.

Mr. David, Jr. said holding the current water allocation to concessionaires is due to the projected monsoon rains around Angat watershed, but any divergence from the weather forecast could still push the agency to adjust the allocations.

Chief of Climate Monitoring and Prediction Annaliza Solis from the government weather service, known as PAGASA, said the weather service is expecting monsoon rains in the coming days.

"Inaasahan po natin (We are expecting) starting this week up to at least week one po ng (of) July, inaasahan natin may mga tinatawag na mga (we are expecting what we call) monsoon rains na dahil papalabas po 'yung bagyo ngayon, hahatak po 'yan ng Habagat. (because the tropical depression is going out, it will pull in the monsoon). We hope may mga ulan po na makaka-contribute sa pagdagdag ng tubig ulan sa Angat Dam. (there will be

rains that can contribute to the rainfall in Angat Dam)" she added.

Ms. Solis said that the weather service is expecting rainfall in Angat Dam in July and August to be near normal. The El Niño phenomenon is also expected to end by August, although there is a possibility for it to continue until first quarter of 2020.

According to Ms. Solis, Angat Dam only received 118 mm of rain from June 1 to 25, or 36% of the normal amount of rain it should get during the period. The dam typically gets 332.4 mm of rain for the month.

Maynilad Water Services, Inc. spokesperson Jennifer C. Rufo said in a text message, "As long as the raw water allocation for Metro Manila remains at the reduced level of 36 CMS, we are constrained to continue implementation of the current rotational service interruption scheme."

"As distributors of water supply, we can only distribute what is given to us, and just maximize that limited supply so that all affected customers will have some water supply daily," she added.

Meanwhile, Manila Water Co., Inc., group head for corporate strategic affairs Nestor Jeric T. Sevilla, Jr. said, "We will continue to implement our rotational service interruptions until the NWRB decides on a new water allocation."

Currently, rotational water interruptions for areas covered by the Manila Water range from 12-17 hours while areas served by Maynilad are experiencing 14 hours of interruption on average.

The current water allocation of 36 cubic meters per second amounts to 3.1 billion liters per day, 10 cubic meters short of the normal 46 cubic meters per second, which is equivalent to 4 billion liters per day, Mr. David said. — **Katrina T. Mina**



Angat's lowest level ever seen

By Miguel Togonon

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) on Wednesday disclosed that Angat Dam may dip to its lowest ever level this week as recent rains brought about by the "habagat" or southwest monsoon have not added water to the dam, which was at the 158.40-meter mark on Wednesday.

In a radio interview, NWRB executive director Seville David Jr. said the figure is below Angat Dam's 160-meter critical level, and is just slightly above the current record-low of 157.56-meter level that was recorded in July 2010, when the El Niño phenomenon characterized by lack of rains gripped the country.

Southwest monsoon has not added to dam's supply.

"If this continues and there would be no rains in the next days, we estimate that before the week ends, we will breach the record-low registered in 2010," said David.

The agency noted that the water supply in Metro Manila was slashed to 36 cubic meters per second from 40 m³/s last weekend due to the dam's declining level and some areas have since experienced rotational water supply outages.

Misery

The dam's declining water level, lack of rains due to El Niño last March and high demand were blamed for a water supply shortage that brought misery to more than a million households in Metro Manila.

In a House hearing Tuesday, Local Water Utilities Administration acting chief Jeci Lapus said Metro Manila's water concessionaires may seek additional water supply from nearby provinces like Laguna, Bulacan and Cavite.

There is no agreement yet on how the proposal could be carried out, said NWRB's David.

Monsoon rains on Wednesday will prevail over parts of Central Luzon, where Angat Dam is located, state weather bureau PAGASA said.





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Palace mulls return of water services under gov't control

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

Malacañang said it is looking at the possibility of government taking back control of water services in Metro Manila due to the water rationing residents

are experiencing.

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo made the remark after Bayan Muna Representative Carlos Isagani Zarate said government should ditch the privatization of water services

since there is no water security under privatization.

"We have always asserted that privatization is wrong. We must abandon privatization and government should take over these water **▶11**

Palace mulls return...

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utilities to ensure not just water security but also transparency and accountability," Zarate said.

In his press briefing, Panelo said Malacañang is studying the proposal.

"Pinag-aaralan lahat ng makakabuti sa mga kababayan natin. Lahat iyan ay kasama sa pag-aaral (We are studying everything that will benefit the public. All options are being considered)," he said.

"Pinag-aaralan lahat ng mga pupuwedeng gawin (We're looking at everything we can do) to solve the problem," he added.

The water interruption in Metro Manila started in March this year, affecting an estimated 52,000 households because of the low water level in La Mesa Dam.

Manila Water spokesman Jeric Sevilla on Sunday said the water interruption in Metro Manila and nearby provinces will continue until the water level in Angat Dam remains in critical level.

He said the 17-hour water service interruption is already beyond the agency's control.

"This situation is going to persist until we get safe and sustainable levels in Angat," Sevilla said in an interview with ANC.

Not 'force majeure'

Meanwhile a lady lawmaker has

called on the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to impose "new and harsher" penalties against the Maynilad and Manila Water for their supposed "incompetence and profiteering."

"Dapat na pagmultahin muli ang Manila Water at isama na rin pati Maynilad sa nagpapatuloy na perwisyoning ito sa ating mga kababayan. Doblehin o triplehin pa ang rebate na ibibigay sa mga customer sa mga susunod na buwan hanggang hindi naibabalik sa normal ang suplay ng tubig (Manila Water and Maynilad should be penalized for this continuing inconvenience. The rebate that will be given to customers in the following months should be doubled or tripled until the supply of water normalizes)," Gabriela Rep. Arlene Brosas said.

She noted that the rebate this month is only for the massive inconvenience last March.

Brosas said the regulating body should not give in to the whims of the two private water concessionaires, saying incompetence and profiteering are not "force majeure".

"The MWSS as the regulating body should not buy the alibi of the two private water concessionaires in their attempt to escape liability over the suffering of waterless households. Hindi force

majeure ang kapalpakan at pagkaganid sa tubo kundi pwersahang pagperwisyon sa mga konsyumer," she said.

Brosas made the call as the MWSS board is set to tackle the force majeure petition of the water firms as millions of Metro Manila households continue to suffer from daily water interruptions.

"Malinaw ang nakasaad kahit sa concession agreement. Pwede lang palusutin ang Maynilad at Manila Water sa kawalan ng tubig kung may gera, tagtuyot at iba pang matinding kalamidad," Brosas said.

She stressed that the lingering water crisis should be not used by the water concessionaires to renew their call for the construction of the China loan-financed Kaliwa Dam.

"Napaka-obvious ng maniobra ng MWSS para ikatwiran ang pangangailangan sa Kaliwa Dam bunsod umano ng krisis sa tubig. Pero hindi ba tayo nagtataka na sa kabila ng konstruksyon ng iba't ibang treatment plants at pagpasok ng tag-ulan, pinalalabas pa ring kapos ng Angat Dam? Something fishy is going around here," Brosas said.

"We assert that the government should take over the operations of the two concessionaires which include the water supply and distribution in the East and West Zones. Kailangang i-reverse ang pribatisasyon ng serbisyong tubig na basic need ng mamamayan," she added. (With a report from Charissa L. Atienza)



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Gov't takeover of Metro water services mulled

Malacañang said yesterday it is looking into the possibility of government retaking control of water services in Metro Manila due to a water crisis as a result of the low water level of Angat Dam in Bulacan.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo made the statement after Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate said that the government should ditch the privatization of water services since there is no water security under privatization.

"We have always asserted that privatization is wrong. We must abandon privatization and government should take over these water utilities to ensure not just water security but also transparency and accountability," Zarate said.

Panelo said that Malacañang is studying the return of water services in Metro Manila under government control.

"Pinag-aaralan lahat ng makakabuti sa mga kababayan natin. Lahat iyan ay kasama sa pag-aaral," he said. "Pinag-aaralan lahat ng mga pupuwedeng gawin to solve the problem," he added.

The water crisis in Metro Manila started in March this year, affecting an estimated 52,000 households, from the critically low water level of La Mesa Dam in Quezon City.

Manila Water spokesperson Jeric Sevilla had said that the water crisis in Metro Manila and nearby provinces will persist until the water level in Angat Dam remains critical.

He also said that service water interruptions lasting as long as 17 hours are already beyond the company's control. **(Argyll Geducos)**

has (safe and healthy wa...)



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Pagasa: Harvest rain for household use

By **Jhesset O. Enano**
@JhessetEnanoINQ

With dry taps across Metro Manila and nearby provinces, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has advised residents to take advantage of the rainfall caused by the southwest monsoon, and harvest rainwater for household use.

"We actually have a lot of water but it goes to waste down our canals," said Landrico Dalida Jr., Pagasa deputy administrator for operations and services, at a press briefing on Wednesday. "But if we harvest the water, it can somehow help

us during the water shortage."

Despite afternoon and evening rain showers in recent days, the water level in Angat Dam has continued to dip, and was recorded at 158.4 meters above sea level on Wednesday morning, down by 0.34 masl from the previous day and almost two meters below the critical level of 160 meters.

Pagasa weather services chief Esperanza Cayanan said the rainfall caused by the enhanced "habagat," or southwest monsoon, due to Tropical Depression "Dodong" was still not enough to replenish the dam.

"The heavier rains were recorded in the western part of the country, but Norzagaray,

where Angat Dam is located, is in the eastern side of Bulacan," she said.

Sonia Serrano, Pagasa hydrologist, said at least 365 millimeters of rainfall are needed exactly above the watershed for Angat to reach 180 masl, its minimum operating level.

Dodong, however, is expected to exit the Philippine area of responsibility by Wednesday night.

In its 4 p.m. weather bulletin, Pagasa weather specialist Ariel Rojas said Dodong was estimated at 755 kilometers east northeast of Basco, Batanes.

Pagasa is also monitoring two low pressure areas (LPA) that were expected to bring

more rains across the country.

One was embedded in the monsoon trough and was spotted 435 km west northwest of Coron, Palawan. Its pull is dividing the monsoon clouds, Rojas explained, lessening the rains above western Luzon.

The other LPA, seen some 1,680 km east of Mindanao, was still outside the Philippine area of responsibility.

In the next few days, cloudy skies with rain showers are expected in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa and Western Visayas.

By Saturday, the Ilocos region and the Cordillera Administrative Region will also have more rainfall. INQ



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Rains to prevail in Metro Manila, western Luzon, Visayas as TD 'Dodong' exits

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Tropical depression "Dodong" was expected to leave the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) Wednesday af-

ternoon, but monsoon rains will persist over Metro Manila, and the western sections of Luzon and Visayas until Sunday.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geo-

physical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) estimated the location of Dodong at 705 kilometers (km) east of Basco, Batanes before Wednesday ►11

Rains to prevail in...

◀1

noon, maintaining maximum winds of 45 kilometers per hour (kph), gustiness of up to 60 kph and moving faster at 15 kph north-northeast.

Even as Dodong exits, PAGASA weather specialist Benison Estareja said the southwest monsoon (habagat) will bring light to moderate monsoon rains with occasional heavy rains from localized thunderstorms until the weekend.

Light to moderate monsoon rains was felt Wednesday in the northern part of Palawan, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Romblon, Marinduque, Aklan, Antique, western portion of Iloilo, Guimaras, Negros Occidental, Masbate, and western sections of Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon.

Today, Estareja said light to moderate monsoon rains with occasional heavy rains due to thunderstorms will affect Zambales, Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Occidental Mindoro, Aklan, Antique, and Metro Manila.

From Friday until Sunday, he said

monsoon rains will prevail in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, Cavite, Batangas, Occidental Mindoro, northern part of Palawan, and Metro Manila.

Estareja advised residents in areas affected by habagat, especially those in high-risk areas from flooding and landslides to take extra precaution and coordinate with their respective local disaster risk reduction and management offices.

Minimal rain for Angat

But rains will remain elusive for parched Angat Dam.

According to PAGASA-Weather Division chief Esperanza Cayanan, monsoon rains are concentrated on the western side of the country, which means that Angat Watershed located in the eastern portion of Bulacan may only receive minimal rains in the coming days.

As of Wednesday morning, Angat Dam's water level was at 158.40 meters, down from 158.77 meters on Tuesday. Metro Manila's main water source is

also poised to fall below the 157.56-meter record low this weekend.

"The water level at Angat Dam may normalize by July or August, unless a cyclone will pass directly over the watershed and bring sufficient rain," Cayanan said.

PAGASA is pinning its hopes on the arrival of another potential low pressure area (LPA) east of Mindanao that could possibly help in the gradual recovery of Angat's water level.

"The new LPA, we hope, could possibly bring rains over the watershed next week. But the weather disturbance is still too far to make an exact projection," Cayanan said.

The cloud cluster, which will likely form into an LPA over the weekend, was located 2,000 km east of Mindanao Wednesday morning, Estareja said.

This Thursday, the rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers due to thunderstorms.

PAGASA warned that rains, especially during severe thunderstorms, could trigger possible flash floods or landslides over low-lying and mountainous areas.



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LIFE GOES ON. Low-lying Malabon City in Metro Manila, which gets flooded even when the rains are not there, is submersed even more piteously this week, with Tropical Depression 'Dodong' lashing the metropolis and surrounding areas—weather forecasters raising hopes the already critical level at Angat Dam will be addressed with up to 13 cyclones expected to hit land in 2019. **Andrew Rabulan**

At least 13 storms needed to refill Angat—PAGASA

TO RAISE the already-critical water level at Angat Dam, which is Metro Manila's main water source, the Philippines will need more storms to dump rain into the reservoir, the state weather bureau said Wednesday.

The dam will get that much-needed liquid from about 9 to 13 tropical cyclones that are forecast to enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility

in the next six months, despite the persistent drought affecting 32 provinces across the country.

Storms supply about half of the water being used for domestic requirements, especially in the National Capital Region, officials of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said in a press

conference.

In other developments:

• Tropical Depression "Dodong" sped up to 30 kilometers per hour while moving northward Wednesday afternoon, the weather bureau said.

Ariel Rojas, PAGASA forecaster, said "Dodong" was forecast to exit the PAR on Wednesday night.

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At least 13...

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- Metro Manila's water concessionaires have submitted a "notice of force majeure" to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System amid the worsening water shortage in the big city.

MWSS chief regulator Patrick Ty said the "force majeure" reason was filed by Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. to explain the water troubles being felt in the metropolis amid Angat Dam's declining water level.

PAGASA Hydrologist Sonia Serrano said the current water level of Angat Dam—which supplies 96 percent of Metro Manila's water—is near the lowest ever mark of 157.56 meters, recorded in 2010.

National Water Resources Board Executive Director Sevillo David Jr. told radio DZMM that if the drought continues, "we estimate that before the week ends, we will breach the record-low registered in 2010."

To normalize its water level, Angat Dam will need more than 300mm of rainfall, Serrano explained. For comparison, Metro Manila experiences about 140mm of rainfall on average every August, which sees rain for 22 days.

"We want to reach 180 meters which is the normal operating level of Angat Dam. That will need about 365mm of rainfall," she noted. **Rio N. Araja and Jimbo Gulle**



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Urgent: Department of Water Resources (1)

Earth, our home planet, is perhaps the only planet in our solar system and galaxy that thrives on water. It is no wonder that our human bodies and everything else that lives and grows on earth need and contain water. Grade school stuff.

At a forum on water some years ago, and with an apocalyptic scenario on my mind, I did raise the question to scientific experts on whether the water content of our planet is constant—that is, what goes up as vapor comes down as rain in the same amount and nothing (I hoped not) escapes to outer space. The answer was yes, but rain needs to fall on the right places.

Well, a miniapocalyptic scenario is before us now in the National Capital Region (and in farming areas), what with water being rationed as it was never done before in this scale that I can recall. The dams supplying NCR are still at their lowest level, even as the skies are hesitant to pour down rain on the parched metropolis.

Time for *oratio imperata*?

There are more people now in NCR than before, and therefore less amount of water for each one. That is, if we are speaking about the water contained in the nearby dams that can only hold so much as main sources. But when there is too much rain, the dam overflow is carried away to the sea, or worse, creates havoc on surrounding communities.

Then factor in global warming/climate change.

Among water and environmental experts, there is now a push for the creation of a Department of Water Resources (DWR). I sought out former environment secretary Elisea "Bebet" Gozun, who cites the more than 30 different government agencies/units that have water-related functions but "there is no centrality of data



HUMAN FACE

MA. CERES P. DOYO

on water resources." Might it be high time to put them all under one umbrella? Good metaphor while we are waiting for the heavens to get us all wet and happy.

A consultant of the National Economic Development Authority (Neda), Gozun is one of the drafters of the bill creating DWR. She was among the founders of the Earth Day Network Philippines and Clean Air Asia, and presidential assistant for climate change during the Benigno Aquino III administration. Gozun, the environmentalist, wears many hats.

A draft bill creating a DWR is being readied, but getting it passed will take time. In the meantime, an executive order (EO) is also being drafted as a short-term measure that would address the water crisis.

The draft bill has gone through the different committees within the Neda Infrastructure Committee (subcommittee on water resources, the technical board and the Cabinet committee chaired by Neda Secretary Ernesto Pernia). Neda has endorsed it to the Office of the President.

According to Gozun, the short-term EO

would strengthen the National Water Resources Board if it is transferred from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to the Office of the President thus transforming it into a national water management council and ensuring a functional integration. Actual integration will need a law.

Gozun notes that, despite the looming 2019 El Niño, no one had planned for it, institutionally that is. There could have been mitigation measures for water users (water supply and sanitation, agriculture, hydropower, recreation, ecosystem protection, etc.).

In this land of self-styled seers, sages and clairvoyants (none in government?), no one has prophesied this bleak scenario.

"Wala kasing Champion for Water within the government," Gozun laments.

If you were a foreign investor, would you invest in a country where flooding is common but water is rationed?

Fragmented approach, outdated water resources assessment, underinvestment in the sector, lack of centralized water data base. In sum, "the multiplicity of institutions and fragmentation in water governance."

An explanatory note on the draft bill creating the DWR says that the DWR "will guarantee the conservation, utilization, control and management of water resources (that) shall be undertaken in a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated manner to meet the present and future water needs of the country." A rain of big words there.

As for us citizens, what do we contribute in our personal capacity to help solve the water crisis?

More next time.

Send feedback to cerespd@gmail.com.



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MEDIUM RARE

Wishy-washy

By JULLIE YAP DAZA

NO water. No lights. Coming soon, flooding, not just any wishy-washy precipitation but “Ondoy-type”!

The cheek of NWRB telling us to conserve when water arrives in weepy trickles twice a day. Then they tell you to save rainwater, knowing there has been no rain strong enough to justify even a guiltless shower. How much water can we hoard sirs?

Why have the bishops been playing high and dry, forgetting to call on the people to pray for rain, the kind that God will pour straight into Angat, Ipo, La Mesa, our fields and farms, lakes and rivers, on our rooftops and the roofs of our cars to give them a free wash (don't give your car a shower when you yourself don't deserve one). Only God can make a tree; only God can create rain, in amounts and durations that will end the drought and bring Angat up to speed. (Can you hear God reminding you, “When you take care of nature, nature takes care of you”?)

When I told my friend I was going to Macau for the weekend, she protested, “What are you going to



do there? You're too 'kuripot' to gamble, you're not even a fan of Portuguese food.”

My answer shut her up, fast: “I'm going there to escape the state of waterlessness in our neighborhood.”

I was being facetious, but she empathized with me, so that was that.

Whether or not Macau is having the time of its life with tourists shying away from neighboring Hong Kong, the fact is that those million-strong demos in HK are just a bonus as far as Macau's tourism program is concerned. Its resident population of less than 500,000 are more than hospitable to the one million visitors dropping in each day from China, thanks to whom the natives are paid an annual stipend of several thousand MOP. Like many of their friends who visit our cities and islands, the mainlanders can be loud, rude, lacking in manners.

With colonies of them swarming the hotel, it was a pleasure to flee and return to Manila. Only when the drive from the airport to home sweet home took up the usual 110 minutes did our spirits dampen. That, and the news that there had been and would be no drought-ending rain for months to come.



Don't waste it

Climate change is happening (despite what Donald Trump thinks) and is making rainfall less predictable and, in many cases, with less rain than before. We are seeing this right now, with the rains not here when it is already the rainy season.

As recent months have shown, we are in a precarious position. The east concession area ran out of water in March. With Angat Dam now below the 160-meter critical level (the water level is the lowest it's been in nearly 10 years), supply from the dam has had to be reduced to 1,200-1,250 million liters per day from 1,600 MLD normally, so the rest of Manila is starting to follow with rotational interruptions. That will continue until there's not just rain, but heavy enough to fill the dam.

Water pressure will have to be reduced and periods of availability limited; no more 24/7 if sufficient rains don't come. What a situation to be in, being dependent on something we can't control—rain. And one we could have addressed but didn't, with a nonacting Aquino administration. It has a lot to answer for in its inaction on this essential commodity.

A second dam is finally underway, seven years from when it was first proposed. Had Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) built the dam then like the concessionaires begged them to, we wouldn't have this crisis now. It will be four or five years before the new dam is finished.

Laguna de Bay is being tapped for more, but given the sad, heavily silted state of the lake, it needs rain, too. It's also a polluted source that costs a lot to clean. Who's supposed to pay for that? The concessionaires? They didn't create this mess, the Aquino MWSS did. Gerry Esquivel should



LIKE IT IS

PETER WALLACE

pay for it out of his own pocket.

The situation is critical, yet we all go on our merry way, wasting water without a care in the world. It's time we all focus on one thing: conserving it. Think before we use water. The government needs to start imposing some forced restrictions.

Australia is the driest continent in the world. Almost everyone there is water-conscious and actively works to use the least water possible. That's the first lesson for us: Change attitudes, convince Filipinos to think every time—"how can I reduce using water in what I'm doing now?" A quick, simple way is to turn off the tap when you brush your teeth. That can save six liters per minute. Multiply that by 10 million people, that's 60 million liters per day (if you clean your teeth twice a day for 30 seconds as you should). About 80 percent of Aussies do that.

Put a brick in the cistern to reduce the volume of water. Install a two-step flush mechanism. Have shorter showers, and turn off the water while soaping. Fix leaking taps, as those drips add up to a lot of

wasted water. Water your garden with a watering can, not a hose which can use up to 1,000 liters per hour. Water in the early morning or, better yet, in the late afternoon to reduce evaporation.

Buy household products that are water-efficient. Only wash clothes with a full load, if you're lucky enough to have a washing machine. Wash your car from a bucket, not the hose. If you must use the hose, do so sparingly. When you wash cutlery and dishes, use a bowl and rinse all together. Collect the rainwater from your gutters. Close to 80 percent of Australians do these things to "do my bit for the environment."

Everyone is going to howl when I suggest this, but an effective way to reduce water consumption is to charge more for that water. The problem with that is it hurts those who don't earn much, but can't qualify for the lifeline rate. That makes another solution difficult—allowing the concessionaires to develop their own raw water sources. That's something they'd be willing to do, but someone's got to pay for it. That someone should not be the concessionaires, as their rates are already below getting a reasonable return. That someone should be us; we should pay properly for what we use. A higher rate will also encourage us to use less water. The lifeline could perhaps be adjusted to include more of those on the border.

Let us Filipinos do our bit for the environment, too. If we want water over the next six or seven years while we await a new dam, we really don't have much choice.

How about we do our bit for the environment and conserve water? We just don't have water to waste; we are now in a crisis.

E-mail: wallace_likeitis@wbf.ph



No reason for water trouble



OVERSIGHT

DANILO
SUAREZ

IN A briefing last March, the Committee on Public Accounts sought the commitment of our water concessionaires regarding the implementation of long-term solutions to this water crisis. Two months hence, our situation remains dire.

It is disappointing that after the actions taken by Congress, there has been no effective measure implemented by the said agencies. During the hearing yesterday, Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo called for the formulation and implementation of long-term solutions to this water shortage. I, along with the members of the Minority, urged water concessionaires to look for alternative sources of water supply.

Quezon Province has provided additional supply during water shortages since the time of President PNoy. During a briefing in March this year, one potential source identified is the Sumag River Diversion Project.

The Sumag River Diversion Project, which was suspended in 2016,

was intended to supplement water supply to Angat Dam. The Sumag River will be connected to the Umiray-Angat Transbasin Tunnel and shall join the Umiray River in supplying water to Angat. It was anticipated to provide 188 million liters of water per day.

“Solutions are right in front of us.”

I highly recommend the revisiting of the benefits that will be produced by this project in the long run. We may recall that this has been stalled back in 2016. Today, I believe that the conditions are proper to resume the construction of this tunnel. Of course, the firm and non-negotiable terms of this project should also be revisited, to assure strict and faithful compliance with the Constitution, environmental, and safety laws.

As we end the 18th Congress, I highly urge the government agencies, especially the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Nation-

al Water Resources Bureau, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Irrigation Authority, National Economic Development Authority, Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources and Public Works and Highways, and water concessionaires Manila Water Company, Inc., and Maynilad Water Services, Inc., to revisit the proposed Quezon project. I agree with the Speaker that we need long-term solutions. These solutions are right in front of us. As a country surrounded by bodies of water, we shall be a living contradiction if this water shortage continues. We have lots of sources but the problem is we lack the means to utilize them and make the most out of it, and the will to pursue the greater good.

It has been an honor to serve as Minority Leader of the 17th Congress. I am confident that the incoming legislators of the 18th Congress will remain true to their mandate. I am grateful that there are legislators who will serve another term and will be able to continue our work of putting forward laws and policies which are geared towards the promotion of public good and national development.



Dry taps on a rainy day



Val A. Villanueva

BUSINESSWISE

HEAVY rains submerged a large swath of Metro Manila on Monday with most homes having to endure a knee-deep flood intrusion into their living rooms.

The sad part is that many of these households have been experiencing interrupted water supply for weeks. If only the unwelcome floodwater flowing into their living spaces could be turned freely and immediately into potable water!

Such is the sorry state that Metro Manila residents have to face daily, aside from the stress of being late for work or school because of heavy traffic, combating inflation, and a host of other worries.

Now, the country's water managers could only wish for a timely intervention from nature. They are hoping for massive storms to fill up Angat Dam, the country's main water reservoir. Perhaps, they should all consider doing a rain dance, a ritual to invoke rain performed by many North American tribes to induce rain, or copy Thailand's "Cat Parade."

But such desire could have disastrous consequences. The storms could wreak havoc on the agricultural sector; not to mention deaths and untold devastation on properties, which could displace thousands of communities directly on the path of the tropical storm.

As expected, the most our "distinguished" elected officials could do is to conduct another legislative investigation which, as previous experience has shown, oftentimes prove futile beyond giving them the opportunity to showcase their grandstanding skills for gut-wrenching soundbites.

Is there no win-win solution to this problem? Water levels at Angat Dam, which supplies water to Metro Manila and Central Luzon, could dive to the 160-meter critical level at any time. If and when that happens, Metro Manilans should expect the worst. Their allocation would be further reduced to 36 cms.

Manila Water Co. says it was "constrained to implement this new rotational scheme.... The additional reduction of 4 cms translates to a deficiency of 350 million liters per day, equivalent to the consumption of almost 700,000 population per day."

The water provider, a subsidiary of Ayala Corp. in partnership with British and Japanese investors, adds that it needed to interrupt service "to almost all of our customers" to distribute "more equitably" the limited supply.

Maynilad Water Services, for its part, explains that it was forced yet again to interrupt services throughout its concession area to maximize the limited stock and ensure that all customers will have some daily water allocation. Maynilad is owned by Metro Pacific Investments Corp. and DMCI Homes.

It's disheartening, to say the least. The country has abundant water resources from lakes, river systems and groundwater. It is estimated that we have fresh-water availability at 149.5 billion cubic meters per year. Despite this, millions of us still lack access to safe, clean and affordable water because of corporate greed.

Water distribution is being increasingly privatized, but access to affordable and uninterrupted water supply remains unresolved. Water privatization started in 1995 due to such issues as government

inefficiency and corruption. Manila Water and Maynilad vowed to provide uninterrupted, cheap, safe and secure water supply. But what happened is that water supply has become erratic and overpriced for corporate profit.

Government records show that water rates have increased since 1995 by almost 900 percent for Manila Water and 600 percent for Maynilad. Net profits by the two companies have steadily increased through the years, reaching P3.3 billion for Manila Water and P5.6 billion for Maynilad as of 2018. The country's water distribution system continues to suffer from supply problems and infrastructure defects, even as Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) continues to fail in properly supervising and controlling water and sanitation services.

The Local Water Utilities Administration is, likewise, powerless to regulate privatization because the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) has limited LWUA's role to a mere observer during the so-called negotiations for joint-venture agreements between target water districts and the private proponent.

My sources are saying that a "private proponent resorts to bribing local government units to influence, force or coerce resisting local water districts to agree to a joint-venture agreement." As allowed by the Build Operate Transfer (BOT) law, JVA is just one of the many—but intriguingly the most commonly used—modes by private proponents under the private-public partnership scheme, despite the fact that other modes do not require private takeover of water system management and operation.

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According to my sources, water district consumers are not informed or consulted, and are generally unaware that their water district has already been privatized.

Note that before a water district can be established, the agreement of the affected people should firstly be secured and confirmed by Local Legislative Resolution through a series of public hearings. It is LWUA that confers the water districts a sort of franchise through a conditional certificate of conformance. By what legal authority is the privatized water district operating now? That is the big question because, as private entities, they are no longer under LWUA.

The bottom line is that the government is not only defaulting on its responsibilities to provide water in major urban areas, but also failing to regulate and hold accountable the private-sector players who have been raking in billions in profits, despite and even if they may not actually and fully fulfill their part of the agreement to provide customers with excellent water and sanitation services. Real big losers here are the consumers, particularly the poor and middle-income earners who have to bear the ever-increasing water bills to satiate the profit-making orientation of private business.

*For comments and suggestions, e-mail me at
mvala.v@gmail.com*



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EDITORIAL

Water department

IF the problem becomes too big, the solution is simply to create an agency larger than it.

This is the congressional consensus as members of the lower house pushed for a Cabinet-level agency to manage the country's water resources and address the recurring supply shortages affecting Metro Manila and nearby areas.

The creation of such an agency is valid if the purpose is to rationalize the state regulatory function over water resources.

Right now, a number of agencies handle the regulation of water services, leading to redundancy or duplicity in authority and jurisdiction. This leads to complications in the division of powers among agencies and confusion among communities and stakeholders.

And so the idea of creating a Cabinet agency for such purpose was hatched.

The House Committees on Public Works and Highways and on Environment and Natural Resources on Tuesday adopted a proposed measure that seeks to create a new government office to rationalize the country's water, irrigation, sewage, and sanitation systems as part of long-term measures to prevent a water crisis.

House Bill No. 8068, or the "Department of Water, Irrigation, Sewage, and Sanitation Resource Management Act of 2018," was jointly adopted by the two panels during an oversight hearing called by Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the impending water shortage as Angat Dam in Bulacan reaches a critical level.

The proposed measure, which was authored by Arroyo, seeks to consolidate the functions carried out by the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

At present, the government agencies are controlled by three separate offices — the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the Office of the President.

In pushing for the bill, Arroyo noted that the Philippines is rich in water sources, but the present set-up resulted in a "poorly coordinated or even conflicts in the implementation of national policies and plans... thereby resulting in backlogs in the provision of water supply and sanitation services to the public."

"It must be stressed that the Philippine government's responsibility to safe, clean, accessible and accessible drinking water, sanitation and irrigation services to the public are of utmost importance, and it is attainable through well-coordinated, effective, efficient and sustainable management of its water and sanitation resources," she said.

The two House panels resolved that HB 8086 be part of the priority legislation that the House of Representatives should act



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Air pollution

AIR pollution is the single biggest environmental health risk that people across the globe, including Filipinos, are facing today, killing more people than the dreaded malaria and HIV/AIDS.

Not only that. Air pollution causes harm to the natural environment, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which is an agency under the United Nations (UN).

Thus, the Filipino people would do well to heed the appeal of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to plant more trees, especially in Metro Manila and other urban areas.

"By planting and growing trees, we improve air quality at the local level and contribute to greener and cleaner environment," according to the DENR-National Capital Region Public Affairs Office.

Arizol Abad of said office issued the statement in connection with yesterday's celebration of Philippine Arbor Day, which is mandated under Republic Act 10176 and Presidential Proclamation 643.

Theme of this year's celebration of Arbor Day in the Metropolitan Manila area was "Grow More Trees and Beat Air Pollution" in accordance with the UN's chorus of calls to combat the problem.

Likewise, the DENR official said trees clean the air by absorbing carbon dioxide, lower ambient heat and mitigate the impact of climate change, which threatens the very existence of plants and animals.

But it is not enough for the people to plant more trees in various parts of the country. The government ought to go after all those who violate environmental laws, rules and regulations.

And the Filipino people, including the ordinary citizens, now want concerned government offices and agencies to really hit hard at the remaining illegal loggers and "kaingeros."



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Metro water crisis traced to Bulacan watershed deforestation

By RAMON EFREN LAZARO

NORZAGARAY – Deforestation of the Bulacan watershed is the main reason for the recurring water crisis in Metro Manila, environmentalists have said.

Bro. Martin Francisco, chairperson of the Sagip Sierra Madre Environmentalist Society Inc. based at the Punduhan ng mga Dumagat in Sitio Suha, Barangay San Mateo in this town, noted that the unabated deforestation of primary forest inside the Angat and Ipo watersheds in Bulacan is a major factor in the depletion of water inside the reservoirs that supply the raw water needs of Metro Manila residents.

He cited the need to relocate informal settlers inside the watersheds to prevent them from engaging in illegal logging and charcoal making to the detriment of forest reserves, adding the government should also focus on forest protection instead of only reforestation.

Personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Bulacan, who do not want to be identified, have confirmed to **The STAR** the presence of informal settlers inside the watersheds, but lamented that the agency has no powers to relocate them.

Around 60 to 70 percent of the 6,600-hectare Ipo watershed have been "touched by human activities,"

the source said.

On the other hand, Francisco pointed out that in 2014, environmentalists, forest conservationists, mountaineers and outdoorsmen banded together to inform then president Benigno Aquino III on the unabated forest destruction being done inside Ipo watershed.

In a letter addressed to Aquino and dated April 29 that year, the group led by Francisco of Sagip Sierra Madre, Edwin Sta. Maria and Linda Nieva of Sagip Kagubatan, Ian Martinez and Frederick Ochavo of UP Mountaineers environment committee reported that "As outdoorsmen, we have access to remote areas of Ipo watershed and stood witness to illegal activities which gravely threaten the continued viability and stability of the water supply of 12 million residents of Metro Manila (2010 Census)."

They came forward to attest to the rampant and unabated destruction, "in the hope that military and police intervention be effected, to immediately halt the clearing of forest by chainsaws and arson, to restrict the transport and trade of forest products

in the protected areas, and to put a stop to the continued settlement and encroachment of illegal settlers in the watershed," in what is supposed to be a protected area.

Meanwhile in Malolos, commemoration of Arbor Day last Tuesday in Bulacan's forests seemed to go unnoticed.

A majority of the forest cover in Bulacan are located in the watersheds of Angat, Ipo and General Tinio, the main water reservoirs for Angat Dam that provides 97 percent of Metro Manila's potable water needs.

Emelita Lingat, provincial officer in Bulacan of the DENR confirmed to **The STAR** that their agency had a tree planting activity in Ipo watershed for the Arbor Day commemoration.

The activity would again be followed by other tree-planting activities by the DENR, national and local government agencies in Barangay San Mateo, said Rolly Mulato, community environment officer of DENR in Bulacan.

Proclamation No. 643 signed in 2004 institutionalized the observance of Philippine Arbor Day every June 25.

On the other hand, Republic Act No. 10176 or the "Arbor Day Act of 2012" was approved on Sept. 12, 2012.

RA 10176 revived the Arbor Day celebration by mandating local government units to hold annual tree planting events.



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GCash to plant 365,000 trees in Ipo Watershed in 2020

GCASH, operated by Globe Fintech Innovations Inc. (Mynt), has moved to adopt the Ipo Watershed by planting roughly 365,000 trees next year through the help of its users, as it aims to help prevent a repeat of the water crisis that Metro Manila has been facing for the past few months.

Tuesday night saw the mobile wallet launching GCash Forest, a new feature that gives account holders the ability to grow virtual trees through the app by doing simple tasks that lessen their carbon footprint such as walking, paying bills through their mobile phones and using recyclable materials, among others.

GCash, which partnered with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (Biofin) for this new feature, is creating a database of all virtually grown trees, and will then plant them at the Ipo Watershed in July 2020.

"This initiative is all about forest for water, water for agriculture and agriculture for food. It is very important that we rehabilitate our forests...and it is critical that we take care of this, since 50 percent of the Ipo Watershed is actually degraded," WWF President Joel Palma said.

GCash Forest is inspired by its investor Ant Financial's Ant Forest. In China, Ant Forest was able to entice Alipay users to join the greening movement, which has resulted in 100 million trees planted in the country's arid regions.

"From our perspective, it's how to get millions of Filipinos every day to do something small as part of their daily lifestyle," Thomas said. "GCash Forest is about making it easier, more convenient, and even rewarding for everyone to take care of our environment for the benefit of future generations."

Based on data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines loses 47,000 hectares of forest cover annually.

"Many Filipinos, especially the younger ones, care about the environment, but a lot of them don't know how they can actively take part in environmental protection. This is a barrier that GCash Forest addresses because they only need to use their smartphones—an already integral part of their daily lives—to make a difference," Thomas said. **Lorenz S. Marasigan**



LAST RECORDED SIGHTING WAS IN 1992



ENDANGERED The critically endangered tamaraw has become a rare sight in the mountains of Mindoro due to poaching and loss of habitat through the years. —PHOTOS COURTESY OF MINDORO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION INC.

TAMARAW SEEN AGAIN AT MINDORO PARK

CITY OF CALAPAN—After 27 years, the elusive tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*) was seen again at Mt. Calavite Wildlife Sanctuary (MCWS) in Paluan town, Occidental Mindoro province.

The tamaraw, one of the Philippines' critically endangered species, resembles the carabao, but it is smaller with shorter horns that grow upward in a "V" form. Its dark brown to grayish black hide is thicker and darker than the carabao's.

Kathy Lene Cielo, program manager of the Conservation Awareness Raising and Education (Care) of the Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc. (MBCFI), said four to six tamaraws could be roaming in the sanctuary, citing the sets of tracks, dung and evidence of grazing.

These were recorded during the Tamaraw Expedition held from June 16 to 21 by teams from MBCFI, Tamaraw Conservation Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources,



SEARCH A participant in a recent tamaraw documentation trip in Occidental Mindoro uses a pair of binoculars to spot the animals on Mt. Calavite.

sources, MCWS Protected Area Office, DENR Occidental Mindoro and D'Aboville Foundation.

Surveys

The tamaraw was last seen on Mt. Calavite in 1992.

"Subsequent surveys in 2010, 2013 and 2015 by various research institutions observed tracks and dung but failed to encounter any live animals until this expedition," Cielo said.

She said the presence of tamaraws was confirmed with an actual sighting of an individual, identified as a juvenile male, near the peak of Mt. Calavite.

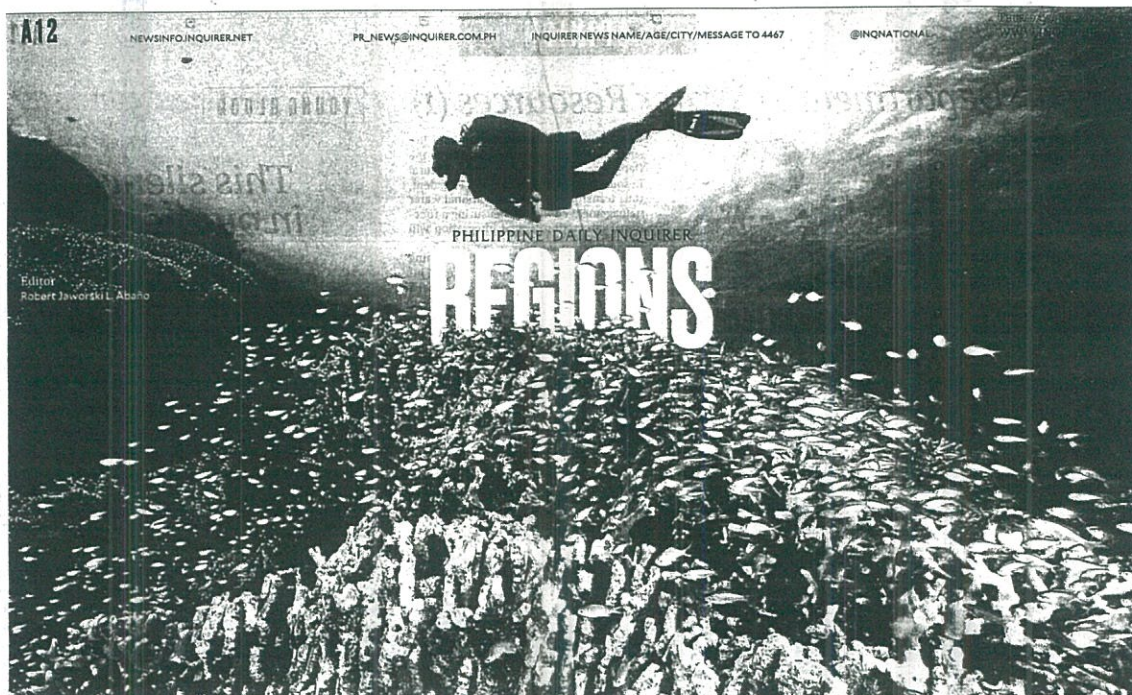
The sighting, Cielo said, meant there were other viable population in the sanctuary.

"This means the number of tamaraws can still increase. We just need stricter guarding of the protected area," she said.

More intensive surveys were recommended particularly in the grasslands and forest patches near the peak and the northern slope of Mt. Calavite, Cielo said.

Also called the dwarf water buffalo, the tamaraw grows only about a meter tall and can only be found on Mindoro Island.

—MADONNA T. VIROLA INQ



UNDERSEA SPLENDOR Camiguin has been attracting divers who want to experience the volcanic island's underwater treasure. The province in Northern Mindanao last week opened the two-month Dive Festival to solicit support for the preservation of its reefs and marine resources. —PHOTO COURTESY OF DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM REGION 10

DIVE FESTIVAL

CAMIGUIN OFFICIALS SEEK DIVERS' HELP IN KEEPING WATERS, REEFS CLEAN

MAMBAJAO, CAMIGUIN—As the province opened its two-month diving festival here, outgoing Gov. Maria Luisa Romualdo urged visitors and divers to help protect Camiguin's marine life, especially its coral reefs, which have become among the island province's prime attractions.

"We hope we can get more divers, responsible tourists, who would help us maintain our dive spots," Romualdo told the crowd of divers, visitors and locals during the opening ceremony of the first Camiguin Dive Festival at Lagundi Beach here last week.

Protected areas

"So, anything you see in the marine-protected areas or in the dive spots which you think can destroy our coral reefs or our fish, please feel free to remove it. I will give you that authority (to take them away)," she said, referring to fish traps oftentimes found on corals and which had been proven to be destructive.

The two-month festival runs from June 23 to Aug. 31 and will showcase such activities as

Scubasurero (or scuba diving to remove underwater garbage), fun dive, dive classes and an underwater photography contest.

Romualdo said the province had been taking care of its marine-protected areas by organizing residents and fisherfolk to safeguard Camiguin's 30 dive sites and fish sanctuaries around the island.

Mambajao Mayor Jurdin Jesus Romualdo, who won as governor in the May 13 elections, said that with the help of divers, the provincial government would work hard to keep Camiguin's coral reefs pristine and "dive-worthy."

"I'm really banking on the dive resorts and all the divers that come here. Help me preserve this beautiful island. I cannot do this alone," Romualdo said.

"What makes Camiguin's corals and other underwater life still intact after the occurrence of volcanic eruptions in the past is in itself a cause for wonder and amazement," he added. "Divers have been telling us that it's more beautiful under the water."

Veteran diver and underwater photographer Bo Mancao said

he considered Camiguin unique as one of the country's volcanic reef islands.

Something new

"I keep coming back here and I keep finding new stuff—be it coral, be it fish, be it invertebrate. There's always something new in Camiguin," Mancao said.

He said he was impressed by how clean the coral reefs were, attributing it to how the local government managed trash disposal.

Diver and blogger Gian Carlo Jubela said he was surprised that Black Forest, a part of the coral reef near the White Island, was free of garbage despite the number of tourists regularly flocking to its sandbar.

"We do hope that it can be maintained. The ocean is life, and if the oceans die, the planet dies," Jubela said.

Candice Naome Dael, Camiguin provincial tourism officer, said the local government was expecting that the dive festival would bring in more tourists to the island in Northern Mindanao. —JIGGER JERUSALEM INQ



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THE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Go Green, send us an email: Environment

FISH FOREVER

Finding a delicate balance between fishing and marine conservation

Text & photos by **FERDZ DECENA**

There's a thin line between reaping the benefits of the sea and protecting this aquatic wealth. Most of time, the interests of fishermen and the management of our precious marine resources don't really meet.

As an archipelago bound on all sides by water, the Philippines has some of the richest marine life in the world. Sadly, this wealth is threatened by unregulated fishing which often leads to overfishing.

"It's a very complicated problem. Fishermen have a catch quota pero walang nakakaalam kung ilan talagang isda ang nasa dagat (while authorities may set a catch quota, no one really knows how much fish is there in the sea)," said Roquelito Mancao, director of Technical Operations of RARE Philippines, the local affiliation of a global marine conservation group.

Early Efforts

Marine conservation efforts in the Philippines started way back in the 1950s as a coastal research development program of the national government when it observed that local fishers were exploiting coastal resources. A community-based coastal resource management model was put into place in the 70s and 80s.

In the 1990s, the coastal resource management model became an essential part of legal conservation efforts on the national and local levels.

Fast forward to 2010, RARE, a global conservation organization, entered the country to empower communities through the 'Fish Forever' coastal program.

The program is all about utilizing pride, changing behaviors, and a small-scale spatial management for

sustainable fishing. The key here is empowerment – letting those who gain directly by fishing the sea know their valuable role in helping sustain this resource.

By using positive reinforcement instead of restrictions, fishermen are empowered and become aware of the value of their resources which they also need to protect.

RARE also conceptualizes mascots representing each project area. Not only are the mascots designed carefully to resonate with the community but symbolizes the critical species in the area. At the moment, there are 38 Fish Forever sites in the Philippines.

Model for Conservation

From the beginning, RARE looked up to the conservation model of the Apo Island at the tip of Negros Oriental. Since being declared a protected seascape and landscape in 1994, the island has become one of the



A boat in the protected area of Badlan on the western coast of Cebu.

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top destinations for diving and snorkeling.

Even after being damaged in the wake of typhoons Sendong and Pablo, the vibrant garden of corals was able to recover, captivating school of jacks returned and waters are once again teeming with resident turtles.

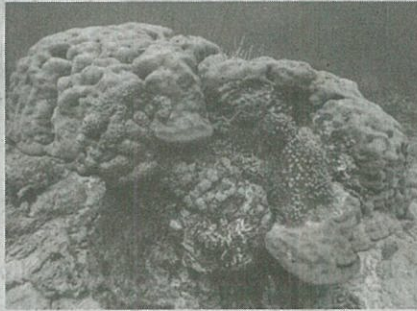
Apo Island hosts up to 200 snorkelers and 100 drivers a day. Visitors are only given 15 to 20 minutes to snorkel with the turtles.

Furthermore, a four visitor per local snorkel guide ratio was implemented to lessen the impact and disturbance of the turtles.

With considerable income coming from tourism, local fisher folks are compelled to lessen, if not altogether stop fishing, to let the marine life recover and propagate.

From Apo Island to Tañon Strait

Applying the successful model from Apo Island to Tañon Strait, the largest marine protected area in the Philippines, can be a big challenge. What RARE did was to take incremental, baby steps, campaigning in one community at a time, a less daunting and more doable plan of action.



At the moment, 22 municipalities are implementing the Fish Forever campaign. One of the notable municipalities is Amlan (photo above) located at the east coast of Negros Island. Left: Underwater treasures of Apo Island.

At the moment, 22 municipalities are implementing the Fish Forever campaign. Two of the notable municipalities are Amlan, located on the east coast of Negros Island and Badian, on the western coast of Cebu.

Amlan is one of the pioneers in implementing the campaign in 2010. The town has been strictly enforcing the ban for commercial fishing and actively apprehending vessels caught violating the Fisheries Code of the Philippines in their protected waters.

The six-hectare Tandayang Marine Sanctuary just off the coast of Amlan beach is a fast-rising spot for snorkeling and diving.

Badian is one of the most popular ecotourism destinations in Cebu. The reasons are aplenty – from the azure waters of Kawasan Falls, to the rugged terrain of Osmeña peaks; from

the excellent diving at Moalboal to the sardine run at Panagsama beach. Less popular but worthy of mention is the best public beach in Cebu, Lambog Beach.

Also under the municipality, Zaragosa Island boasts of the longest-managed sanctuary in the country spanning 30

years. RARE is managing a 25-hectare marine protected area consisting of 10 hectare of sea grass and 15 hectare as fish sanctuary.

Changing Behaviors, Changing the Future

With positive reinforcement campaigns like Fish Forever, RARE has set an example on how changing behaviors can forever alter the way local communities value their coastal resources. If we stop to think long and deep about it, this is the essential key to long-lasting environmental conservation and preservation.

Yes, we need to partake of the bounty of the sea; however, we must also be of the mind that there needs to be changes in how we consume and conserve these riches if we want the present and future generations to enjoy the benefits.

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Mapping system detects blue carbon on coasts

Harnessing the power of satellite and laser mapping images, researchers from the University of the Philippines-Diliman have developed a web community-based tool to assess the presence of blue carbon in coastal areas.

The Integrated Assessment and Modelling of Blue Carbon Ecosystems for Conservation and Adaptive Management (IAMBlueCECAM) project, led by Ariel Blanco of UP-Diliman, has produced an accurate and detailed mapping system of mangrove forests and seagrass habitats in selected pilot sites using remotely sensed data and ground-based measurements.

The mapping system could also assess or detect blue carbon ecosystem zonation, species composition and aboveground biomass presence.

The Department of Science and Technology - Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development

(DOST-PCIEERD), which provided the funds for the project, said that the mapping system can be used by local government units (LGUs), especially coastal cities and municipalities, to gather information on the extent of their mangroves and presence of species in the area that they can use for conservation and effective management.

The UP Diliman project covered Coron, Busuanga and Puerto Princesa in Palawan, Ibabay, Batan and Kalibo in Aklan, and Banate Bay in Iloilo as pilot areas.


Blue carbon refers to the carbon captured and stored by the coastal ecosystems, specifically mangroves and seagrasses (also called carbon sinks), for millions of years.

When these ecosystems are degraded, they release the captured carbon back to the atmosphere, greatly contributing to climate change. It is thus beneficial to everyone that mangroves and seagrasses are conserved and protected.

"Local governments need to recognize the importance of these blue carbon ecosystems. Its non-use was valued at over P35 million per hectare in Puerto Princesa, Palawan – 20 times higher than the use of its wood for fuel. We hope that this number alone can encourage our local communities and tourists to conserve these ecosystems given their value," said Enrico Paringit, PCIEERD executive director.

The valuation of the non-use of blue carbon ecosystems refers to the benefits received by the local community through the presence of these ecosystems.

Aside from being as blue carbon sinks, mangroves serve as habitat for marine species and protect the communities from the damaging effects brought about by strong winds, hurricanes, and big waves; while the seagrass beds serve as nursery for fishes and stabilize sea bottom against intense waves. – Rainier Allan Ronda

ARYA

IRWIN CORPUZ

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS DAPAT PAGTUUNAN NG LGUs!

BAHAGI sa pagpapayabong ng mga produktong isda ay dapat na pangunahan at pagtuunan ng mga Local Government Units (LGU's) ang paglalaan ng proteksiyon sa lahat ng mga MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPA) sa ating bansa.

Sa isinagawang "Kapihan at Talakayan Tungo sa Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan" kamakailan ng BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES (BFAR) kasama ang UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) at ng UP MARINE SCIENCE INSTITUTE'S MARINE ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES FOUNDATION (MERF) sa Sulo Riviera Hotel, Quezon City ay sinentruhan ang sitwasyon ng mga MPA's sa ating mga karagatan na mayroong mga regulasyong ipinairal sa pagsasagawa ng pangingsda o panghuhuli ng mga isda.

Ang ating bansa ay mayroong 1,500 MPA's sa buong bansa kabilang na ang mga santuwaryo ng mga endangered marine species na tulad ng mga sea turtles, sharks at dugong..., na ang mga ito ay malayo sa itinakdang 161 target sa ilalim ng PHILIPPINE FISHERIES CODE of 1998 at sa 10% target sa ilalim ng AICHI CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.

"The strength of the fisheries sector relies upon the strong partnership and collaborations among the national government, LGUs, the private sector and other stakeholders. We in the DA-BFAR harness this interface by recognizing best practices on sustainable fisheries development through our banner programs such as the Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan (MMK)," pagpupunto ni DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE at BFAR DIRECTOR EDUARDO GONGONA.

Ang MMK ay inilunsad noong 2016 para bigyang pagkilala ang pagsisikap ng mga COASTAL MUNICIPALITIES para sa pagbibigay proteksiyon at pangangalaga sa ating mga marine environment..., na mayroong ipinairal na 5 general criteria.

Ang mga criteria ay 1) walang illegal fishing, 2) pagsunod sa itinakdang closed season for fishing, 3) pag-iestablisang ng marine protected areas, 4) malinis na tubig-baybayin na hindi kakikitaan ng domestic at industrial wastes at, 5) epektibong mangrove protection at rehabilitation program.

Puspusan ang paglikha ng iba't ibang insentibo ang mga EXPERT at SCIENTISTS pata mahikayat ang lahat ng mga kinaaukulan para sa pangangalaga ng ating mga karagatan lalo na ang ating mga municipal water areas, sa gayon ang mga non-commercial fishing ay magkaroon din ng masaganang huli ng mga isda.

Ayon nga kay BFAR DIRECTOR GONGONA, kung mapangalagaan lang ang mga municipal water areas ay hindi kakayaning ubusin ng mga ordinary fishermen ang mga isda at lalo na ang mga kailaliman ng karagatang sakop ng municipal area ay mahihirapan ang mga ordinary fishermen na mapaghuhuli ang mga isdang naninirahan sa mga malalalim na lugar. Sa aspetong ito ay dapat na makalikha rin ng pamamaraan ang mga LGUs sa kung papaano maaani o mahuhuli ang mga isdang nasa malalalim na lugar sa mga legal na pamamaraan.

Maganda ang mga programang inilulunsad ng kasalukuyang administrasyon, subalit kung patuloy na iiral ang illegal fishing na ang mga protector ay ang ilang mga tiwaling government official ay mananatiling kawawa ang mga pobrang mangingsda..., kaya kakailanganin din dito ang pakikipagpartisipa ng iba't ibang organisasyon ng mangingsda na sila ang magdokumentaryo at magbigay ulat sa mga abusadong government official na nagsisilbing mga protector sa-kanilang mga 'bataan' para makopo ang masaganang ani kahit sa ilegal na mga pamamaraan. Dapat maging modelo ang mga government official sa pagpapairal ng tamang pangingsda!



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No time to waste: PHIL reckons with managing trash

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By VG CABUAG & JONATHAN MAYUGA

LIKE bees to honey, people holding plastic bags on one or both hands troop to a truck painted yellow-orange but smeared with rust and dirt. Throwing garbage has become a habit for people living on this dead-end street in Barangay Bagbag, Novaliches, Quezon City.

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Indeed, throwing and collecting waste is a system that is currently under scrutiny. The scrutiny came with the onset of rain and of the reality there are Filipinos who throw waste with insouciance: anywhere and everywhere.

And, instead of dump trucks, rivers, seas and oceans are the collectors.

The presence of waste from countries like Canada, Korea and the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong in recent days have also added pressure to the country's waste management system.

The pressure point was revealed during the attempt to clean up a portion of the Manila Bay: human waste is endangering the archipelago's waters.

Blue Economy

AT a forum on minimizing marine plastics organized by the University of the Philippines National Engineering Center (UP NEC), Gerardo F. Parco underscored the importance of sustainably managing the so-called Blue Economy.

With a Blue Economy portfolio of \$4 billion and as part of the effort to fight poverty, the World Bank is supporting the sustainable development of the ocean or sea-based economy with concrete actions to address ocean health, according to Parco, senior environmental engineer at the World Bank. A big portion of the WB portfolio on the Blue Economy is about marine plastics, he said at the forum dubbed "ConNECt: Doing our Part" held at the UP-NEC building in Diliman, Quezon City, on June 7.

"In the Philippines, as much as 40 percent of the proteins of the Filipino come from fish, so the 'Blue Economy' is very important in terms of the economy in general but in society [in particular] as source of nutrition because it is a big percentage of protein," Parco said at the forum.

Elsewhere in the world, the Blue Economy—or anything that has something to do with the ocean—is as important, as they contribute to growth and development.

"Around 3 percent to 5 percent of the global GDP [gross domestic product] is derived from the Blue Economy," he said.

Essentially, the Blue Economy approach to reducing poverty involves addressing marine or ocean plastic pollution as it involves the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health—all under threat from plastic waste that found its way to the ocean.

ConNECt, which aims to showcase scientific projects, research works and accomplishments in the field of engineering—in this case, on marine plastics—also aims to raise awareness on the value of engineering and science and their critical roles in improving the quality of life of ordinary people.

Under the sea

CITING various sources, Parco said the world uses 300 million tons of plastic a year and that 8 million metric tons of plastic winds up in the oceans each year.

The Great Pacific Garbage

Patch alone, he said, is now three times the size of France with nearly 2 trillion pieces of plastic. It is located between Hawaii and California.

Even beaches in the farthest area are besieged by plastics, making its proliferation in the ocean a global concern.

"Under a business-as-usual scenario, there will be more plastics than fish in the ocean by 2050," Parco warned.

He said the Philippines ranked third among 20 countries in terms of mass of mismanaged plastic waste in 2010, with 1.88 million metric tons/year. It was next to China with 8.82 million metric tons per year and Indonesia with 3.32 million metric tons per year.

By 2025, this mass of mismanaged plastic waste will increase further, he added, citing the report "Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean" by Jenna Jambeck of the University of Georgia. The Philippines will still rank third at 5.1 million metric tons per year, while China and Indonesia's contribution will grow to 17.8 million metric tons per year and 7.42 million metric tons per year, respectively.

"We don't import much plastic but we emit a lot of plastic in the ocean. This is a problem," he said. "We are not a big economy but, based on studies, the plastic we dispose of compared to our imports is proportionately large."

Parco said this is alarming, considering that the Philippines is at the epicenter of Earth's marine biodiversity.



Slipping to oceans

OCEAN plastic leakage is attributed to poor solid waste management, according to Parco.

Of the total 2.7 million tons a year of plastic waste, about 84 percent or 2.27 million tons are collected. About 16 percent or 432,000 tons are uncollected.

Of the tons of uncollected plastic waste, 31 percent or 135,000 tons (about 26 percent) are leaked to the ocean.

Meanwhile, of the million tons of waste collected, 17 percent or 386,000 tons are leaked to the ocean.

This is because private hauler companies unload trucks en route to disposal sites in order to cut costs, mostly to poorly located dumps.

"This means that even if waste [is] properly collected, some of [these are] still leaked to the ocean. This means we are all contributing to ocean plastic pollution," Parco explained.

"Many open dumps are located adjacent to waterways. Are they properly covered? No. In the event of a typhoon, a lot of it is washed away into the nearest water body like Manila Bay," he added.

Meanwhile, tons of uncollected waste are leaked to the ocean because of limited or zero collection at informal settlements that prompt residents to deposit waste at informal sites.

This is aggravated by small litter and waste that find their way into canals or creeks that eventually flow directly into waterways.

Ingested microplastics

PARCO noted that plastic is causing deaths of marine wildlife that ingest it, like whales and marine turtles.

Despite efforts to remove plastics, such as annual coastal clean-ups, a huge volume of plastic waste stays in the ocean.

"This is because 80 percent to 90 percent of plastics do not float. They stay underwater," Parco said.

A more disturbing report is the fact that plastics are nonbiodegradable.

In time, plastics break down and become smaller and smaller, until they become invisible to the naked eye and become microplastic, which are consumed by fish that is part of the human diet.

Adelina C. Santos-Borja, Resource Management and Development Department head of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), said that even freshwater

environment is adversely affected by plastic pollution.

Microplastics, which easily pass through water filtration systems, end up in the ocean and lakes, posing a potential threat to aquatic life, according to Santos-Borja.

Citing a five-year trash audit conducted by Mother Earth Foundation, Parco revealed that in the Philippines, 163 million plastic sachets, 48 million plastic bags and about 3 million baby diapers are used and disposed of every day.

More than half (54 percent) of these are branded plastic waste, of which 60 percent can be traced to only 10 major manufacturing companies.

Near manufacturers

ACCORDING to Santos-Borja, "floating plastic waste is often mistaken for food by marine animals and, once ingested, these animals

will die slowly of starvation as their stomachs are filled with plastic debris."

As much as possible, proper solid waste management, reducing waste that includes plastics by recycling or repurposing will help address the problem, she said.

Maria Antonia N. Tanchuling of the UP Institute of Civil Engineering in Diliman observed that plastics comprise 25 percent to 50 percent of trash, based on waste analysis and a characterization study they conducted of the samples they collected from river mouths.

"The most dominant were polymer-shape fragments, originating from bigger plastic materials," she said, which means that the plastics were there for a very long time that they became smaller and smaller.

Tanchuling, who presented a recent study on microplastics in

Metro Manila's rivers, said there were also pellets found in areas where plastic manufacturers operate. Such is the first real evidence that manufacturing companies are also guilty of direct discharge of plastic waste into Metro Manila rivers, notably, in Valenzuela City, the so-called Plastic City.

Environmental costs

ACCORDING to Parco, the cost of ocean plastics to the tourism, fishing and shipping industries in the Asia-Pacific alone was \$1.3 billion in 2008; while damage to marine ecosystems is estimated to be at least \$13 billion per year.

"As the Philippines has one of the longest coastlines in the world, managing plastic waste is somehow a problem," he said.

According to Parco, addressing ocean plastic pollution, even plastic pollution alone, has an accompanying price tag.

For instance, he said, the use of sachets is common among poor consumers.

"If you ban sachets, the first to be affected are the poor. So you don't just come up with a policy banning plastic because it affects the poor," Parco said.

However, using an alternative to plastics, like cardboard or paper, also has its disadvantages, he said.

Cardboards and papers easily fill up landfills. The environmental cost of producing paper or cardboard is also a disadvantage, Parco noted, adding that using glass also entails additional cost in terms of energy use.

All in all, the environmental cost of plastic in the consumer goods sector under a business-as-usual scenario is estimated at \$139 billion. An alternative to plastic will entail a much bigger cost at \$533 billion.

"Other packaging materials will entail 80 percent more energy cost and 130 percent more greenhouse gases.

"Plastics use less energy to manufacture and transport than alternative materials," he noted.

Moreover, Parco said plastics generate fewer greenhouse-gas emissions and less waste.

Seeking solutions

THERE are, nonetheless, initiatives addressing waste.

For one, Nestlé Philippines became the first manufacturer to implement a residual waste-recovery program in partnership with Valenzuela City, the Department of Education (DepEd) and Green Antz Builders Inc.

Through its "May Balik! Sa Plastik!" campaign, the company focuses on the collection of packaging materials that end up in sanitary engineered landfills or open dumps.

The program targets the re-

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covery of waste laminates such as postconsumer sachets and used beverage cartons. Incidentally, Nestlé Philippines was named by environmental group Greenpeace as the top culprit of ocean pollution as a result of brand audits it conducted in the past two years.

Parco said there are various ways to address plastic pollution, whether inland or in the ocean, beyond the usual coastal clean-ups.

Improving solid waste management—from collection to recycling and proper disposal in sanitary landfills to prevent leaks to the ocean—will help address the problem, he said.

Also, the use of advanced technology and solution to plastic is something to look forward to—like using plastic as construction material for road construction, for instance.

According to Parco, there are many ways to dispose of plastic,

particularly single-use plastics that end up as residual waste because they cannot be recycled, like sachets or packaging materials with aluminum foils.

“Use them to make roads. Why not? San Miguel is already doing this,” he said.

Still fragmented

HOWEVER, private-sector efforts on waste management have been fragmented. The latter rests on their notion that it costs more to recycle rather than use new raw materials. Hence, companies create their own standards on how to go about managing what they produce.

For instance, a shopping mall such as SM generates close to 18,000 cubic meters, or about 18 million kilos, of waste every year. And that number is increasing.

According to its sustainability report, SM was able to recycle

88 percent of its waste (about 15.38 million kilos) last year. It is unclear, however, how the mall operator arrived at that figure, only that it “engages their tenants, vendors and customers in recycling activities.”

Property developer and mall operator Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) applied a different tack. ALI established a program to become carbon-neutral in about three years or by 2022. The term “neutral” mainly refers to offsetting what they produce by doing another thing to protect the environment. In this case, ALI will plant trees in certain areas equivalent to every carbon dioxide it releases to the environment.

At the moment, its malls and offices produce about 68,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year. Such figure is expected to grow as the company also plans to double its income and revenue by 2020.

Main pollutant

NEUTRALITY is now becoming a buzzword among companies as they can choose which effort to do to clean up their act rather than focusing on the main problem of waste management.

The companies led by the Po family, the makers of Century Tuna and the owner of the Shakey's Pizza brand in the Philippines, want to become “plastic-neutral” by 2020.

They recently sealed a deal with Aboitiz-led Republic Cement to co-process consumer plastic waste, converting these to energy as an alternative fuel in producing cement.

“The amount of plastic that the organization produced will help other companies like Republic utilize [for their manufacturing]. There's some cost involved because there is collection and that's what we take care of, the cost of collection,” Shakey's Pizza Ventures Inc. president Vicente Gregorio said.

“Sometimes it's not just about lowering the cost. There will be extra costs, but we just have to do our part to go green,” he said.

Packaging, such as plastic bottles and bags, has always been blamed as one of the Earth's main pollutants.

Investing in recycling

BOTTLING firm Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines Inc., now a unit of Atlanta's The Coca-Cola Co., will spearhead a P1-billion project to put up a food-grade recycling facility that will transform used PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottles into new and recyclable beverage bottles.

These plastic bottles, however, are already being collected by poor communities but shipped out of the country to be processed elsewhere in the world since there's no local facility to remanufacture these.

Gareth McGeown, president of Coca-Cola Philippines, said the facility will be located outside Metro Manila. It will collect, sort, clean and wash post-consumer plastic bottles and turn these into new bottles that the company itself will use or be sold to other beverage firms, even if these are their competitors.

The company said it plans to use at least half of the recycled content in their packaging by 2030.

McGeown said the facility will have a capacity of 16,000 tons a year and will be the first in Southeast Asia. It will start construction of the facility toward the end of the year and may be operational by 2020.

The total being produced in the country using PET bottles are about 130,000 tons.

McGeown said the local Coke softdrinks maker will only own a portion of the said facility and the rest will be by its local partner and an international technology partner.

Researching alternatives

COKE'S former owner San Miguel Corp., on the other hand, claimed that before sustainability even be-

came a buzzword, its packaging business was already practicing recycling since it uses bottles for its beer business.

“Having swapped plastic bottles for reusable glass and metal, consumers are turning to more sustainable alternatives like biodegradable packaging formats, or visiting refilling stations with used containers rather than buying brand-new products,” San Miguel said, adding that more people are holding manufacturers accountable for managing post-consumer waste.

Even other bottled water companies are slowly placing their produce in bottles as they try to reduce plastic usage.

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As many cities in the country are now banning single-use plastic bags—because these clog waterways—manufacturers are producing more waste than ever, such as paper bags and reusable eco-bags made of cloth or any other material other than plastic.

Many consumers are finding the use of paper bags very impractical since they tear easily and cannot be used for wet products.

“The only way to make paper products stronger is to add wax,” D and L Industries Inc. (DNL) president Alvin Lao said. However, Lao said wax is not biodegradable and increases the cost of paper packaging.

RA 9367

BIODEGRADABLE plastic is just as strong as regular plastic bags and also cheaper than paper bags and has less environmental impact because it does not require the cutting of trees, Lao explained.

He claims DNL is “doing a lot of research and development on the use of plastic bags but there has to be a law such as the ‘Bio Fuels Law’ [Republic Act 9367] so that there will be consistencies in the execution.”

Lao said he and other DNL executives are meeting with officials of the Marikina local government to discuss the difference between a regular plastic and biodegradable plastic. The latter uses mainly plant-based material and the biocompostable products, which can decompose under certain conditions. However, many of the LGUs still think that all plastic bags are created equal.

If a regular plastic bag, for instance, takes about 50 years to decompose, the biodegradable ones only take months to become part of the environment, Lao explained.

“People are becoming aware of the issue [on plastic use] but the alternatives are still being discussed until now,” he said. “We are helping them to find the alternatives.”

Lao noted there is no unified rule yet on the use of biodegradable plastics; thus, some LGUs totally ban all plastics while some LGUs allow the use of biodegradable plastic.

“What is needed is a legislative mandate for the uniform use of biodegradable plastics,” Lao said.

Replication efforts

DNL has a starch-based product that can replace plastic, though it costs more. It’s currently being used in mulching films, as well as garbage, compost and shopping bags. New applications include using laminates in the paper industry.

Still unsegregated waste is not that bad.

The Metro Pacific Investment Corp. has proposed to build a P22-billion facility to convert all the Metro Manila waste being dumped in Payatas in Quezon City into energy. The said facility will convert 3,000 metric tons of waste into 36 megawatts, or more than the city’s requirements.

If successful, the company said it will replicate the effort in many local government units around the country that do not have their own proper waste disposal system.

With Jennina Marie Mora, Intern

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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▲ WORKERS put finishing touches on an installation art of a beached blue whale with its intestines full of plastics to depict the plastics pollution of the world's oceans, on April 26, 2019, on the front lawn of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila. *The Cry of the Dead Whale* was the brainchild of Filipino artist Biboy Royong and executed by fellow artist Roderick Banares. AP/BULLIT MARQUEZ



13 PH cities make WWF One Planet City contest

THIRTEEN cities from across the Philippines have successfully qualified to participate in the 2019-2020 edition of World Wide Fund for Nature's One Planet City Challenge, following guidelines posted earlier this year by the international organization.

Returning to OPCC 2019-2020 after having participated in the previous rounds of the challenge in the country are Batangas City, Cagayan de Oro City, Parañaque City, Pasig City, Quezon City, Santa Rosa City, San Carlos City, and Tagum City.

Joining them are first-time qualifiers Davao City, Dipolog City, La Carlota City, Malolos City, and Muntinlupa City.

To guide these cities, WWF Philippines has partnered with ICLEI Southeast Asia to provide technical assistance.

WWF-Philippines President and CEO Joel Palma was pleased with the five new PH cities to the roster, and encouraged other cities to make similar commitments to the environment.

"With these new cities joining this iteration of the OPCC, it shows that, year by year, we as a country are becoming increasingly concerned with our impact on the environment. I hope in the future runs of OPCC, we will see even more Philippine cities joining, and that as a na-

tion we begin taking our commitments to the climate more seriously," said Palma.

The OPCC, known as the Earth Hour City Challenge when it was first launched in 2011, is a biennial global challenge that recognizes feats of infrastructure, housing, transportation, and mobility enacted by cities in commitment to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.

WWF recognizes the importance and highlights the roles of cities in combating climate change, with 55 percent of the human population residing in urban centers and with 70 percent of global emissions emanating from them.

The call for applicants was given out in February this year, inviting cities from around the globe to show tangible commitments in line with the Paris Agreement and the 1.5C global warming goal, and to report ambitious, cross-cutting, inclusive big-win climate action plans that deliver on those commitments.

Now on its sixth run, the OPCC has grown to become the largest and longest-

running challenge of its kind, with 411 cities having accepted the challenge and recorded a total of 5,732 recorded actions.

With these positive impacts, WWF projects that 3,856 metric tons of greenhouse gases could potentially be saved by the year 2050.

Previous OPCC global winners include Vancouver, Canada in 2013; Cape Town, South Africa in 2014; Seoul, South Korea in 2015; Paris, France in 2016; and Uppsala, Sweden in 2018.

Pasig City was named as Philippine winner during the 2017-2018 iteration of OPCC, while Santa Rosa City took the award during 2015-2016 edition, the country's first time participating in the challenge.

Qualifiers from the Philippines will now join contending cities from across the globe which will be required to report the following most important components of the OPCC assessment:

- Existing targets and commitments of applying cities;
- Action plans;
- Greenhouse gas inventories; and
- Renewable energy and/or energy efficiency solutions.

These cities will then be put before an international jury of experts, who will assess each cities' performance in working towards a global warming cap of 1.5 degrees Celsius.



Charter flights halt costs Boracay resorts P2B

By MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO [@akosistellaBM](#)
Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

BARELY recovered from their massive losses from the six-month closure of Boracay Island last year, hotels and resorts in this so-called crown jewel of Philippine tourism face close to P2.1 billion in losses in the next three months.

The unfortunate development arose from the sudden suspension by the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) of new and additional char-

tered flights to Caticlan and Kalibo in Aklan, both gateways to the popular resort island.

In an interview with the

7,000

Rooms on which resorts will lose money because of the CAB moratorium. With an average nightly rate of P2,500, these resorts could lose P735 million in one month alone, or close to P2.21 billion from July to September

BUSINESSMIRROR, Christine Ibarreta, president of the Hotel Sales and Marketing Association Inc. (HSMA), said, "almost all hotels [are affected by the CAB memo].

They [hotel rooms] are all blocked and paid in advance."

Specifically, of the 14,000 rooms available on the island, resorts will lose money on some 7,000 rooms because of the CAB moratorium. Using an average nightly rate of P2,500, these resorts stand to lose a total of P735 million in one month alone, or close to P2.21 billion for three months—from July to September, considered the lean season on the island. "That's already a conservative estimate," Ibarreta said, as the projection is made using the lowest average nightly rate.

Many of these charter flights, she noted, affected their Chinese clients.

Regarding the memo's basis, CAB Deputy Executive Director Al-

exander Paul T. Rivera explained: "The moratorium was issued as a followup measure to the Boracay environmental cleanup ordered by the President, to sustain the gains and benefits to protect the island."

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat, who is vice chairman of the CAB, failed to respond to this paper's request for comment on the matter.

Meanwhile, officers of the three tourism stakeholders associations on Boracay—the Compliant Association of Boracay, Boracay Foundation Inc., and Boracay Chamber of Commerce and Industry—confirmed that they were not consulted by the Department of Tourism (DOT) nor any member of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force, before

or after the CAB memo was issued.

"We're not saying it's wrong," said Virgilio Sacdalan, vice chairman of the Compliant Association of Boracay. "We just want to know why [CAB issued the memo], considering we are already in the lean season," he pointed out.

For her part, one sales and marketing director of a 300-room resort on the island said: "Everyone was shocked when the memo from CAB came out on June 11." She declined to be named as she was not authorized to speak on the matter.

For her hotel alone, the bookings cover 1,450 room nights in July, which is equivalent to a P20-million loss.

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"The travel agents are also affected, because they claim they have to pay penalties to the booked passengers," the industry source noted.

Her guests were supposed to be coming from Naning, Wuhan, Hefei, Chongqing, Wenzhou and other Chinese cities.

Asked for comment, DOT Spokesman and Undersecretary for Tourism Development Planning Benito C. Bengzon Jr., only said, "We will discuss the matter with the private sector [on Wednesday]." The DOT met with tourism stakeholders on Wednesday to discuss the National Tourism Development Plan.

CAB's memo on June 11, 2019, states: "This is to inform all carriers operating to and from Kalibo and Caticlan that a moratorium is implemented effective immediately on all new and or additional scheduled and charter flights to Kalibo and Caticlan airports, including new and/or additional flights approved for IATA summer season 2019."

All carriers were also required to revert to their 2018 winter schedule. "Likewise, approvals and further processing of charter flights [to] Kalibo and Caticlan will be held in abeyance until further notice." Estimates by resorts on their losses due to the six-month closure of Boracay last year were varied, but the National Economic and Development Authority earlier estimated the economy lost close to P2 billion.

According to the CAB, four carriers with charter services to Kalibo are affected by the moratorium. Most of them come from several points in China and South Korea. These are Tigerair Taiwan, Air Busan, Zhejiang Loong Airlines and Far Eastern Air Transport.

Rivera clarified: "Charter flights that were approved by CAB prior to the release of the moratorium will be allowed to proceed/operate as scheduled. But those applying for charter flights will be suspended or held in abeyance due to the moratorium. In other words, no new approvals for chartered flights will be approved, but only for Kalibo and Caticlan flights, when the moratorium is in effect." Most of the charter carriers with previously approved schedules fly three to four times a week.

No charter flights had been approved for Caticlan before the moratorium was declared.



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San Antonio mayor pumalag sa itatayong Subic Naval Reservation

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES - Kinontra ni incumbent Mayor Estela Deloso-Antipolo ang balak ng Department of National Defense (DND) na gawing naval base ang 70 porsiyento ng bayan ng San Antonio.

"We strongly object and have conveyed our disapproval of the plan of the Department of National Defense to the proposed Subic Naval Reservation. The proposed Subic Naval Reservation will encompass the entire Redondo Peninsula, leaving only 30 percent of our present land area," anang alkalde.

Ginawa ni Antipolo ang pahayag bilang tugon sa direktiba ng Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR) na komentuhan ng lokal na pamahalaan ang rekomendasyon ng DND para sa pag-isyu ng Presidential Proclamation na gawing pasilidad ng navy ang 289,051,550 metro kuwadrado ng lupain sa Redondo Peninsula.

Nahahati ang Redondo Peninsula sa dalawang munisipalidad ng San Antonio sa gawing kanluran at Subic sa silangan.

Matatagpuan sa kanlurang baybay dagat ang Silanguin Bay, Nagsasa Cove, Talisain Bay, Agnaem Bay at Anawangin Cove.

Kilala ang mga ito bilang pangunahing tourism site ng lalawigan. **(Randy Datu)**



18 establishments owned by foreigners padlocked

Eighteen restaurants and business establishments owned or managed by Chinese citizens in Paranaque City were ordered closed for operating without necessary permits and for violating city ordinances.

Paranaque City's chief of business permits and licensing office, lawyer Melanie Soriano-Malaya also, disclosed that most of the restaurants are located in Barangays Tambo and Baclaran, 100-meter away from world class hotel and casinos at the Entertainment City on Coastal Road.

Ordered padlocked were Wu Pinna Restaurant, registered under the name of Roberto Ho; Tuixianglo Restaurant, registered to Domingo Palmaria; Sunshine Mart, also under

the name of Palmaria; All Thing Supermarket, registered to Robert Ong; and Juzi Mart, named to Vicky Terzenio.

The establishments, all located in Barangay Baclaran, operated without mayor's and business permits and violated city ordinance on sanitary and environment laws.

Also padlocked were Shabu-Shabu Restaurant, under the name of Jin Yuan Ji; Chinli Eatery, named to Timoteo de ver Lajara; Shaxian Food Pub, registered to Maryjame Tangan; Cravemouth, of Marvin Yabut; Abner and Angels Food House, operated by Abner Maestro; Dao Dao Chinese Restaurant; Chinli Eatery, both with no names of operators.

The establishments are located

in Barangay Tambo.

On the other hand, Yaki Yaki Homemade Dish located in Barangay Sto. Nino was also padlocked last June 20.

Soriano-Malaya said the restaurants also violated a city ordinance which requires business establishments in foreign language to have accompanying translation in alphanumeric characters readable by the public.

She said the crackdown on erring establishments was ordered by Mayor Edwin Olivarez amid reports that Chinese businesses have proliferated in the city with signage and menus written only in Chinese characters and catering exclusively to Chinese tourists. **(Dhel Nazario)**



Exclusive Chinese restaurants, stores in Parañaque ordered closed

By Edd Reyes

PARAÑAQUE City Mayor Edwin Olivarez ordered the closure of 18 restaurants and business establishments reportedly owned by Chinese citizens with Filipino dummies for operating without necessary permits and for violating several city ordinances.

City Business and Licensing Office head Atty. Melanie Soriano-Malaya said most of the restaurants are located in Barangays Tambo and Baclaran, 100-meter away from world class hotel and casinos at the Entertainment City in Coastal Road.

Among those ordered padlocked were Wu Pinna Restaurant registered to Roberto Ho; Tuixianglo Restaurant and Sunshine Mart both registered to Domingo Palmaria; All Thing Supermarket registered to Robert Ong; and Juzi Mart, named to Vicky Tercenio. The establishments were all located in Barangay Baclaran and operating without mayor's and business permits and violating city ordinance on sanitary and environment laws.

Also padlocked were Shabu-Shabu Restaurant registered to Jin Yuan Ji; Chinli Eatery registered to Timoteo de ver Lajara; Shaxian Food Pub registered to Maryjame Tangan; Cravemouth registered to

Marvin Yabut; Abner and Angels Food House, operated by Abner Maestrado; Dao Dao Chinese Restaurant and Chinli Eatery, both with no known operators. These restaurants were all located in Bgy. Tambo.

On the other hand, Yaki Yaki Homemade Dish located in Barangay Sto. Niño, was also padlocked.

Soriano-Malaya said the restaurants also violated a city ordinance which requires business establishments in foreign language to have accompanying translation in alphanumeric characters readable by the public.

Mayor Olivarez ordered the crackdown following reports that Chinese businesses have proliferated in the city with signages and menus written only in Chinese characters and catering exclusively to Chinese tourists.

The city chief executive learned that majority of the Chinese-owned restaurants are using Filipino dummies and being protected by some groups in the area for them to operate illegally.

Soriano-Malaya added that they have inspected and initiated tax mapping of the establishments last April but the owners still failed to settle their respective tax liabilities to the local government.



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MAIL MATTERS

OceanaGold clarifies story

LAST June 20 an article written by Brenda Jocson (Led by Padilla, NV hits miner's license renewal) was published and a quote alleges that the Mines and Geosciences Bureau advises our company to use lime for the foul smell of our tailings pond.

Another article, published last June 23 and written by Ben Ebreo and Brenda Jocson (Miner's new permit up to Duterte—MGB) states that DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu has decided to halt our operation by issuing a cease-and-desist order pending our renewal.

We have never used lime in our tailings storage facility as our use of clean production technology in

our process plant (cyanide- and mercury-free) result in non-hazardous mill tailings.

Likewise, we have not received any cease-and-desist order from the office of Secretary Cimatu pending our renewal. We lodged our application for renewal of our Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement with the Philippine Government in March 2018. We received confirmation dated June 20, 2019 from our regulatory authority, the MGB, that we are permitted to continue operations pending the confirmation of our renewal by the Government. We are committed to operating in ac-

cordance with the law and will always comply with all our responsibilities under our contract with the Philippine government.

We operate the world-class Dipipio Mine and promote the advancement of responsible mining in the Philippines through internationally recognized and leading environmental community and employee programs and commitments. You are most welcome to visit our mine at your most convenient time.

DAVID WAY

General Manager—OceanaGold (Philippines) Inc.



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Abandoned mining pit 'swallows' 4 men in Albay

FOUR men who entered an abandoned open mining pit on Tuesday were buried alive in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

Police Regional Office 5 spokesperson Maj. Ma. Luisa Calubaquib identified the victims as Orly Bisco, 36; Timoteo Balunzo, 30; Salvador Bata, 25; and Erwin Velasco, 29, all fishermen.

An unidentified man asked the victims to get a submersible pump left inside the mining pit owned by Shian Banania at Purok 5, Bgy. Batan at 5 p.m. on Tuesday.

Veloso and Salvador were the first to enter the mining pit but failed to come out prompting Baluzo and Bisco to follow and rescue the two.

Baluzo and Bisco also failed to resurface.

Rapu-Rapu Municipal Police Station chief Capt. Dante Bonafe said they received the report about the four men after an hour and immediately coordinated with the Philippine Coast Guard Rapu-Rapu and the Regional Health Unit for a search and retrieval operation.

Zaida delos Reyes

DPWH to upgrade collapsed road after truck mishap

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is set to upgrade the 50-year-old road in Manila, which collapsed from the weight of a truck loaded with 40 tons of sand on Sunday.

"The road, which sits on top of a box culvert and built in the 1970s will be upgraded to conform with the present standard design of the department," the DPWH said yesterday.

The agency's South Manila District Engineering Office will first undertake soil exploration from Roxas Boulevard to M.H. Del Pilar street to determine the scope of works and timeline of the construction.

The DPWH said it could not say when the road repair would be completed.

A portion of Remedios street near Roxas Boulevard collapsed after the 14-wheeler truck passed through.

The DPWH said the second-

ary road, which could carry only 20 tons, gave way because the truck weighed 42 tons.

Officials said the portion of the road that collapsed was built over a double barrel box culvert, which served as one of the main drainage systems in Manila.

DPWH district engineer Mikunug Macud said they would file charges against the truck driver, Michael Lagco, for violating the load limit and passing through a secondary road where trucks are banned from traversing.

The truck, which came from Pampanga, was headed to Baywalk to deliver tons of sand for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project when it fell into a hole.

Lagco said he was supposed to take Roxas Boulevard's main road, but traffic law enforcers allegedly directed him to pass through the service road to give way to a fun run event. — Edu Punay



Workers of the Department of Public Works and Highways repair Remedios street in Manila yesterday, which collapsed from the weight of a truck on Sunday.



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'DEFENDING IN NUMBERS' REPORT

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PH RIGHTS, GREEN ACTIVISTS MOST TARGETED BY VIOLENCE IN ASIA

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Land rights defenders, environmental activists and prodemocracy advocates in the Philippines are among those who suffer most from human rights violations in Asia, facing harassment, violent attacks and death, according to a recent report.

In its biennial report "Defending in Numbers" released late in May, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia) said the Philippines had the most number of cases of violations against environmental activists, documenting 39 out of 135 cases against land rights defenders in the entire region.

Forum-Asia said the land rights defenders included indigenous peoples, farming and peasant groups and local communities "whose land, life and livelihoods are threatened by the exploitation of the environment and the establishment of development projects."

135 cases

Of the 135 cases it cited, 94 were reportedly perpetrated by state agents such as the military and police. But the report also

noted the increasing role of civilians, including those representing business and corporate interests.

In one case in December 2017, eight members of the T'boli-Manobo S'daf Claimants Organization, a group resisting the occupation of their lands by a business group, were killed at Barangay Ned in Lake Sebu by soldiers.

The military claimed that the men were members of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Gun attack

In another case, Ricky Olado, a member of "lumad" group Tinanaon Kulamanon Lumadnong Panaghiusa in Arakan town, Cotabato province, was gunned down by motorcycle-riding men in January 2018.

Olado's group was opposed to mining and logging companies that were encroaching on lands of the local indigenous community in Arakan valley.

Between 2017 and 2018, Forum-Asia said it documented 688 cases of violations that affected over 4,800 people across 18 countries, including members of human rights organizations, local communi-



ANGER OVER DATU'S DEATH "Lumad" community members hold a protest rally on April 16 outside Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, holding the Duterte administration liable for the killing of Datu Kaylo Bontolan, a tribal chieftain in Talaingod, Davao del Norte province. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

ties and media.

Aside from environmental activists, the others at risk were women defending human rights and those fighting to protect democracy and democratic institutions, which accounted for

the most number of cases in the region at 210.

Asia has long been considered an unsafe region for environmental defenders. In 2017, a report by Michel Forst, the UN special rapporteur on the situa-

tion of human rights defenders, said it was the second most dangerous region after Latin America.

A separate report by international watchdog Global Witness, tagged the Philippines as

Asia's most dangerous for environmental defenders, noting that 48 campaigners were killed in 2017, a 71-percent increase from 28 in the previous year.

In the recent Forum-Asia report, the Philippines was followed by Vietnam and India in the number of cases, with 23 and 17 documented violations, respectively.

Conservative figures

It noted, however, that these figures were still conservative since many of the activists were socially and geographically isolated, and do not consider themselves to be human rights defenders.

Most of the recorded violations were judicial harassment in the form of administrative charges or delays or denial of fair trial, and arbitrary arrest and detention.

"Across Asia, human rights defenders are threatened, harassed, persecuted, and at times killed for promoting and protecting human rights," Forst said. "Many of their rights inscribed in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders are continuously violated, even as 2018 marked the 20th year anniversary of its adoption." INQ



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500 INVESTORS VS CLIMATE CHANGE

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HALOS 500 investors sa buong mundo ang nagkapit-bisig para igiit sa mga pamahalaan na gumawa ng nagkakaisang aksiyon laban sa climate change.

Mga gobyerno sa buong mundo kinalampag 500 INVESTORS VS CLIMATE CHANGE

Sundan sa pahina 1

Isang bukas na liham para sa Governments of the World ang ipinalathala ng naturang mga investor na humahawak sa mahigit \$34-trillion na assets sa iba't ibang panig ng mundo.

Sa kanilang liham ay pinabilisan ng mga investor sa mga gobyerno sa buong mundo ang pagpapasiya kung ano ang dapat gawing aksiyon upang maipatupad ang Paris

Agreement Target.

Magugunitang noong 2015 ay halos 200 mga bansa ang nagkasundo sa Paris na limitahan sa 1.5 °C ang pagtaas ng temperatura dahil sa gas emission.

Itinaon ng mga investor ang paglabas ng kanilang bukas na liham sa G20 Summit sa Japan sa Hunyo 28 at 29 kung saan magpupulong ang 20 pinakamalalaking ekonomiya sa mundo.

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TINGNAN NATIN



By VIC REYES

MAY mga bagong customs police na pala sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

Tama at napapanahon ang ginawang pag-deploy sa baluarte ni BoC-NAIA district collector Mimel Manahan-Talusan ng dagdag na customs police sa mga terminal ng paliparan.

Kailangang pangalagaan ng customs police ang kapakanan ng dumaraming BoC-NAIA stakeholders.

Nandiyan rin ang paulit-ulit na tangkang pagpupuslit ng kontrabando, lalo na ng mga ipinagbabawal na gamot, kabilang na ang shabu at cocaine.

Ang mga bagong pulis ay mga miyembro ng BoC-Enforcement and

Security Services o ESS, sa ilalim ni Director Felimon "Yogi" Ruiz.

Sa isang briefing, in-isa-isa ni Collector Talusan, anak ni dating BoC Depcom Julie Singson-Manahan, ang tungkulin at responsibilidad ng isang ESS agent.

Ibinahagi rin ni Ma'am Mimel sa mga pulis ang 10-point priority program ni Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo "Jagger" Guerrero.

Sasalang sa marksmanship training ang mga bagong pulis.

Malaki ang maitutulong ng mga taga-ESS para gumanda ang BoC service sa pangunahing international airport sa bansa.

Mukhang extended ang summer season sa bansa.

Dati hanggang Mayo lang ang dry season.

Ang tanda nga natin, pangalawang linggo pa lang ng Mayo noon ay nagtatanim na ng palay ang mga magsasaka.

Hindi na kasi masyadong mainit dahil paul-

an-ulan na noon.

Ngayon, Hulyo na sa Lunes, pero sobra pa rin ang init ng panahon.

Kung hindi tayo nagkakamali ay naramdaman natin ang pinakamaiinit na panahon halos buong buwan ng Mayo.

Bunga daw ito ng palalang problema ng tinatawag na global warming.

Nangyayari ang global warming dahil sa addiction ng tao sa fossil fuels at pagkalbo sa ating mga kabundukan.

Pinuputol din natin ang mga punong kahoy sa ngalan ng "progress and development."

Ang resulta? Puro semento, yero at gusali na ang nakikita natin sa ating paligid.

Pati mga ibon, tutubi at paru-paro ay wala na sa mga progresibong syudad at bayan.

Nakakalungkot!

Kahit anong batikos, hindi na yata talaga mawawala ang mga political dynasty.

In fairness naman sa ibang political dynasties,

talagang mahal sila ng taumbayan, lalo na ng mga botante.

Galit lang ang tao sa mga pamilyang gumagamit ng dahas at pera para manalo sa eleksyon.

Kaya pabayaang lang natin na ang mga botante ang humusga kung sino ang mga nais nilang mamumuno sa kanila.

Inuulit natin. Pabayaang nating manungkulan ang mga matitinong miyembro ng isang political dynasty.

Pero ang mga walang silbing anak, kapatid, apo at iba pang kamag-anak ng mga dynasty ay hindi na dapat bigyan ng pagkakataong manilbihan dahil pulos kawalanghiyaan lang ang gagawin ng mga yan.

Tama ba kami, Pangulong Duterte?