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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Roy Cimatu

CIMATU SUSPENDS DRAGON BOAT RACES IN BORACAY

By Patricia Denise M. Chiu
@PDMChiuINQ

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday suspended dragon boat race activities on Boracay Island following the accident that claimed the lives of seven rowers this week.

The suspension included practice and training by any dragon boat group, Cimatu said, adding that it would allow the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) to scrutinize and improve emergency protocols.

All agencies involved in emergency rescue and response are scheduled to meet on Sept. 30 to conduct a comprehensive assessment of protocols, logistics and resources, and to come up with recommendations to address gaps.

Any recommendations or changes to the protocols will be subject to the approval of the BIATF.

Member-agencies of the BIATF include the local government of Malay and its municipal disaster risk reduction and management office, the Philippine National Police Maritime Group, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Department of Tourism, local dragon boat associations and other water sports groups.

On Wednesday, seven members of the Boracay Dragon Force died while 14 others were injured when the boat they were rowing capsized off Boracay Island.

They were training for an international competition in Taiwan.

Initial investigation of the incident showed the boat capsized after it was hit by large waves brought about by sudden violent wind gusts. INQ



Dragon boat races in Boracay ordered stopped

By Rio N. Araja

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday ordered the temporary suspension of dragon boat races in Aklan's Boracay Island in the wake of a fatal accident claiming the lives of seven members of the Boracay Dragon Boat Team.

Such activities are "postponed for the time being until emergency protocols are thoroughly scrutinized," he said.

"We are temporarily suspending all dragon boat race activities in Boracay, including practice and training, until we have assessed their practice protocols," he asserted.

Cimatu is the Boracay inter-agency

task force chairperson.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources chief, all agencies involved in emergency rescue and response are set to meet on Sept. 30 to conduct a comprehensive assessment of protocols, logistics and resources, and to come up with recommendations to address gaps subject to the approval of the BIATF.

The agencies include Malay local government and its disaster risk reduction and management office, Philippine National Police's Maritime Group, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism, local dragon boat associations and other water sports associations in

the Philippines.

Cimatu expressed his sympathy to the victims and their families.

He vowed to strengthen emergency response programs in Boracay Island to prevent a repeat of the incident.

Last Sept. 25, seven members of the Boracay Dragon Force died, while 14 others were injured when the boat they were rowing capsized off Boracay Island.

The group was training for an upcoming international competition in Taiwan.

Members of the team were not wearing life vests during that time, while one of the paddlers did not know how to swim, report said.



IN WAKE OF TRAGEDY

Dragon boat races in Boracay suspended

We are temporarily suspending all dragon boat race activities in Boracay, including practice and training, until we have assessed their practice protocols

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has announced the temporary suspension of all dragon boat race activities in Boracay in the wake of a deadly accident that claimed the lives of seven members of a local-based dragon boat group.

Cimatu, who chairs the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), said that such activities are "postponed for the time being until emergency protocols are thoroughly scrutinized."

"We are temporarily suspending all dragon boat race activities in Boracay, including practice and training, until we have assessed their practice protocols," Cimatu said.

All agencies involved in emergency rescue

and response are scheduled to meet on Monday, 30 September to conduct a comprehensive assessment of protocols, logistics and resources, and come up with recommendations to address gaps subject to the approval of the BIATF.

These agencies include the local government of Malay and its Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism, the local dragon boat associations and other water sports associations in the Philippines.

On 25 September, seven members of the Boracay Dragon Force died, while 14 others were

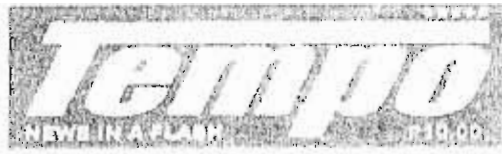
injured when the boat they were rowing capsized off Boracay Island. The group was then training for an upcoming international competition in Taiwan.

Upon learning of the incident, Cimatu expressed his sympathy to the victims and their families, as he promised that emergency response programs will be strengthened in Boracay to prevent a similar incident in the future.

According to reports, the boat capsized after it was hit by large swells of waves originating from the sudden violent gusts of wind before the dragon boat racers reached the third bay of Tulubhan Beach in Barangay Manoc-manoc.

Members of the team were not wearing life vests during that time, while one of the paddlers did not know how to swim, the reports added.

The local government of Malay, Aklan and partner agencies have extended their support to the bereaved families by offering them services, such as financial assistance, stress debriefing, cadaver management and security.



Dragon boat activities in Boracay suspended

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu temporarily suspended all dragon boat race activities in Boracay in the wake of the recent tragedy off the island involving a local dragon boat group that killed seven of its members.

"We are temporarily suspending all dragon boat race activities in Boracay, including practice and training, until we have assessed their practice protocols," Cimatu said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources chief, who also chairs the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force, said that such activities are also currently postponed "until emergency protocols are thoroughly scrutinized."

Cimatu assured the public that the agency will enhance its emergency response programs in Boracay to prevent similar tragic accident in the future.

The local government of Malay, Aklan and partner agencies have

extended their support to the families of the victims and offered financial assistance, stress debriefing, cadaver management, and security.

According to Cimatu, all agencies involved in emergency rescue and response are set to meet on Monday to conduct a comprehensive assessment of protocols, logistics, and resources, and come up with recommendations to address gaps subject to the approval of the BI-ATF. **(Alexandria San Juan)**



DENR suspends dragon boat races in Boracay

**By Joel
dela Torre**

ALL dragon boat activities in Boracay are suspended temporarily in the wake of a sea tragedy that claimed seven lives.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu announced this yesterday, saying that not a single dragon boat activity would be allowed until emergency protocols are thoroughly scrutinized.

A local dragon boat capsized Wednesday after experiencing sudden violent gust of wind at the waters off Sitio Lingay in Bgy. Manoc-Manoc.

Seven of the 21 passengers died while others were taken to the hospital.

The group was conducting training for an up-

coming international competition in Taiwan when they met the accident.

"We are temporarily suspending all dragon boat race activities in Boracay, including practice and training, until we have assessed their practice protocols," Cimatu said.

All agencies involved in emergency rescue and response are scheduled to meet on Monday to conduct a comprehensive assessment of protocols, logistics and resources, and to come up with recommendations to address gaps subject to the approval of the BIATF.

The agencies include the local government of Malay and its Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, Philippine National Police Maritime Group, De-

partment of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism, the local dragon boat associations and other water sports associations in the country.

Cimatu expressed his sympathy to the victims and their families, as he promised that emergency response programs will be strengthened in Boracay to prevent a similar incident in the future.

Reports said that members of the team were not wearing life vests during the practice, while one of the paddlers did not know how to swim.

The local government of Malay, Aklan and partner agencies have extended their support to the bereaved families by offering them services such as financial assistance, stress debriefing, cadaver management, and security.



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Dragon boat activity sa Boracay ipinagbawal ng DENR

Pansamantalang ipinagbawal ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ang pagsasagawa ng dragon boat race activities sa Boracay matapos maganap ang malagim na trahedya na ikinasawi ng pitong miyembro ng local-based dragon boat group.

Ayon kay Cimatu na siya ring namumuno ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), bawal muna ang mga naturang aktibidad sa isla habang pinag-aaralan pa ang mga ipatutu-

pad na patakaran tungkol dito.

"We are temporarily suspending all dragon boat race activities in Boracay, including practice and training, until we have assessed their practice protocols," ani Cimatu.

Nabatid na sa darating na Setyembre 30, magkikita-kita ang mga ahensiya na kasama sa emergency rescue at response upang magkaroon ng comprehensice assessment ng protocols, logistics at resources at makabuo ng re-

komendasyon na magpupuno sa mga kakulangan na siyang aaprubahan ng BIATF.

Kabilang sa mga ahensiya ang Lokal na Pamahalaan ng Malay at ang kanilang Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism, local dragon boat association at ibang samahan ng water sports sa Pilipinas. **(Dolly Cabreza)**



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Onward recovery Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman Danny Lim lead the inspection of Pasig River to crank up the rehabilitation program of the water system.

DENR PHOTO



Phl, Japan sign pact on sustainable mining

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The Philippines, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), signed a three-year memorandum of cooperation with Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) to promote and carry out cooperative activities toward sustainable mining in both countries.

The MOC was signed on Aug. 16 in Tokyo by Minister Yoshihiko Isozaki of METI and DENR Undersecretary for policy, planning and in-

ternational affairs Jonas Leones on Cimatu's behalf. The agreement came into effect from the date of signing until 2022.

It aims to strengthen cooperation in the mining industries between the Philippines and Japan. The two countries agreed to support each other in promoting sustainable development in their respective mining and mineral resources sectors.

Both countries were hoping to strengthen their ties through regular dialogues and cooperation in the areas

of mining policy on exploration, development and operation; information sharing on supply-demand trends; and best practices in sustainable development and operation in mining.

Other areas of concern are security in exploration, development and operation of mines; appropriate environmental impact assessment; and improvement of investment environment to attract more investors to the mining sector.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said he is looking forward to a "more efficient and

environmentally sustainable" mining in the country following the signing of the landmark cooperation agreement.

"We are gradually entering into a new realm and climbing greater heights when it comes to mining with this cooperation with the Japanese government," Cimatu said.

Japan, once a world-class producer of metals, now has 5,000 suspended and abandoned mines throughout the country and JOGMEC has been rehabilitating mines and working on mine pollution control since the 1970s.



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Boracay water utility compliant with DENR standards

Boracay Tubi System Inc. (BTSI), one of the two water utility providers in Boracay Island, is fully compliant with the government's effluent standards following the recent rehabilitation of the country's top tourist destination.

In a statement, BTSI said its joint water sampling conducted with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in its interceptor and water outfall located in Sitio Lugotan in Boracay showed full compliance with the agency's effluent standards.

This after an incident where yellowish liquid flowed out of its submerged pipe one kilo-

meter away from the island's shoreline.

"In less than 48 hours, we conducted joint sampling with the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau at both its interceptor and outfall which showed compliance to effluent standards," BTSI said.

"We take this incident seriously and wish to reassure the public that there is no direct discharging of untreated wastewater into the open sea. All wastewater is being treated on site at the individual sewage treatment plants of establishments it serves," it said.

The water firm noted that it

encourages recycling of treated wastewater for irrigation and flushing purposes and any excess goes to its interceptor as a safeguard.

"The individual STPs and interceptor are constantly monitored in-house, by the DENR-EMB, and by third-party laboratory testing firms for compliance to the latest DENR standards," BTSI said.

"In fact, we are one of the very few providers in the Philippines and the first provider in Boracay Island to comply with the stringent effluent standards for treated wastewater discharge," it added.

The company is also in-

vestigating possible illegal tapping and intrusion into the pipeline leading to the outfall as it traverses a distance of one kilometer toward the shoreline and an additional one kilometer from the shoreline to the outfall.

BTSI has been operating in Boracay for 20 years. Aside from its treated wastewater recycling program, it also supports the island's rehabilitation projects, adoption of the biggest wetland in Boracay, planting of 2,500 mangroves in Sitio Lugotan, and sponsoring of the designation of the island as a water quality management area.

— Louise Maureen Simeon



08-07-13

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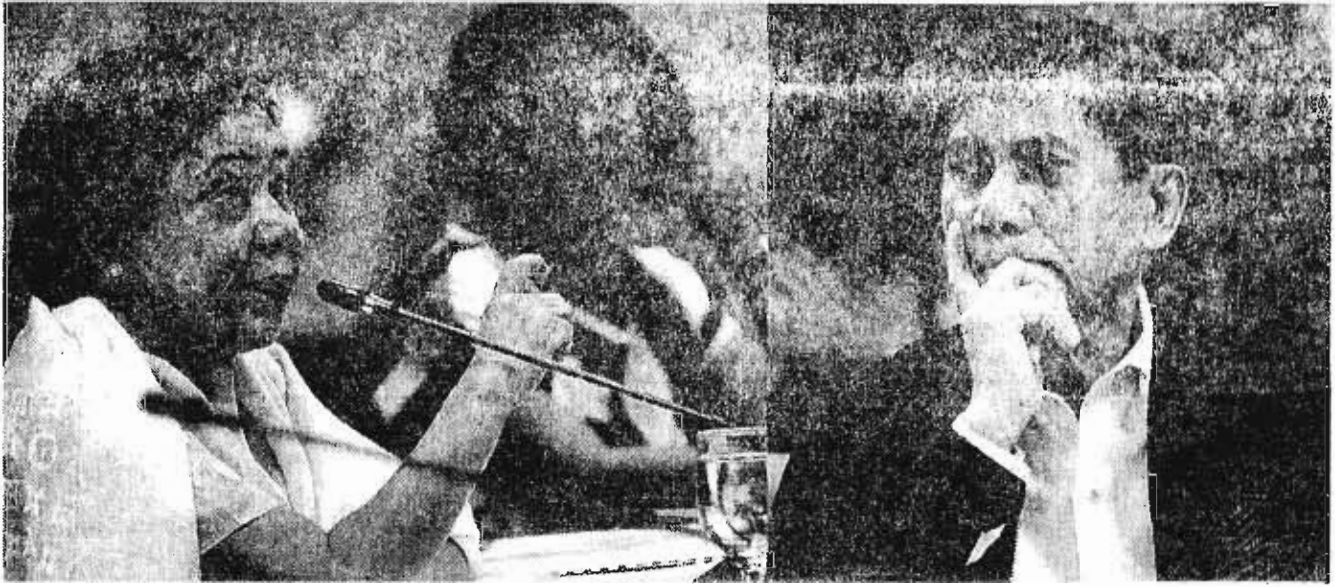
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BORACAY WATER FIRM COMPLIES WITH DENR

BORACAY Tubi System Inc. (BTSI) on Friday said it had complied with the government standards after being issued with a temporary cease and desist order by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). In a statement, the company said its joint water sampling with the DENR in its interceptor and water outfall located in Sitio Lugotan,

Boracay Island showed full compliance with the agency's effluent standards. Following the tests of BTSI's waste water, it found that fecal coliform has gone down to less than 1 most probable number per 100 millimeters (MPN/100 ml), which was earlier reported at 3,500 MPN/100 ml against an effluent standard of 400 MPN/100 ml. BTSI is one of the two water utility companies in Boracay Island. **EIRENE JAIREE GOMEZ**



DENR BUDGET. Senator Cynthia Villar, chairman, Senate committee on Finance Subcommittee B along with Senator Nancy Binay field questions to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu during the Senate hearing on 2020 Budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and its attached agencies as well as the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission. **Lino Santos**



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EXPENSES FOR RELOCATION QUESTIONED

HUGE CUT IN BUDGET FOR PASIG RIVER REHAB SOUGHT

Sen. Cynthia Villar on Friday moved to slash by as much as two-thirds the proposed P257-million budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) for 2020 as she questioned the agency's plan to spend for the relocation of in-

formal settlers living along the polluted waterway.

At the Senate budget hearing of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the senator quizzed PRRC officials why they were allotting money for the "social

preparation" of families living in shanties near Pasig River.

"They are meddling with the relocation. I've done it in Las Piñas. (PRRC) cannot do it. It should be the local (government unit)," Villar told reporters after the hearing. —MARLON RAMOS INQ

Pasig rehab body receives only half of budget

Senators take housing and flood control projects out of agency's tasks

By Hananeel Bordey

The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) might get only half of its P261 million proposed budget for 2020 as Sen. Cynthia Villar moved to delete projects for housing and resettlement that were included in its expenditure plan.

During the deliberations on the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the mother agency of PRRC, Villar said she is eyeing to remove around P144 million worth of projects, which include housing and resettlement and flood control.

Of the said amount, P135 million refers to the Design and Riverbanks Development and Flood Control Program, while P9 million has been earmarked for the housing of informal settlers.

"We retain the public information and clean-up and, instead of the environmental management program, you should do the clean-up. That's clear. You should focus on cleaning up Pasig River... then we remove the others," Villar said.

After the Senate Finance Committee vice-chair manifested her motion, Sen. Francis Tolentino pointed out that the housing-related projects should be done by the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD).

Tolentino reiterated his opinion that all funds for the housing development should be lodged with the DHSUD.

The neophyte senator emphasized that PRRC has no office tasked for the construction of houses.

"I would propose that we relieve them of that responsibility of having a housing component, because it seems that they cannot do it, and they are not the ones who should do it," Tolentino said.

Recently, President Rodrigo Duterte fired PRRC chief Jose Antonio Goitia for alleged corruption thriving in the commission. In his place, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu took over as the agency's head.

The PRRC was created in 1999 through an executive order to lead the rehabilitation of the river for transportation, recreation, and tourism purposes.



02-13-19

Pondo ng Pasig River rehab pinag-initan ni Cynthia

Plano ng senador na bawasan ng halos kalahati ang panukalang P261 milyong pondo ng Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) sa susunod na taon.

Sa pagdinig kahapon sa Senado, inirekomenda ni Senador Cynthia Villar, head ng Senate environment committee na tanggalin ang P135.2 milyong pondo para sa Design/Riverbanks Development and Flood Control Program at P9.1 bilyon para sa pabahay ng mga informal settler.

"I'd like to move that we remove this budget for Easement Recovery, Housing and Resettlement Program from the Pasig River. I don't think they can do this," sabi ni Vilar.

"They can only do clean up and may be public info, but they cannot do the relocation," dagdag pa nito sa panayam ng mga reporter matapos ang pagdinig.

Bukod diyan, kinuwestiyon din ni Villar ang 'social preparation' program ng PRRC.

"Hindi naman kailangan iyon. I've done so many relocation in my life. Ang importante sa kanila iyong mahanapan mo sila ng bahay kasi very limited and number of houses doon," ani Villar.

"...And then give them some money so that when they relocated, siyempre hindi sila makakatrabaho at least, meron silang spending money siguro for two weeks," dagdag pa nito.

"Tanggalin na natin sa budget 'yan. Hindi naman totoo 'yan. Wala na 'yan, tanggalin n'yo na sa budget 'yan kasi wala 'yan," ayon pa sa senador.

Bago ito, iminungkahi ni Senador Francis Tolentino pag-isahin na lang ang pondo ng housing sa bagong tatag na Department of Housing.

"I would propose that we relieve them of that responsibility of having a housing component na mukhang hindi naman nila kaya at hind nila dapat gawin," ani Tolentino. **(Dindo Matining)**



DENR stops (944-hectare) reclamation project in Bacoor

By **VANNE ELAINE P. TERRAZOLA**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will not anymore permit the 944-hectare reclamation project in Bacoor, Cavite following the opposition by Senator Cynthia Villar.

During the deliberation of the Senate finance subcommittee B on the DENR's P25.5-billion proposed 2020 budget, Villar questioned environment officials for supposedly entertaining plans to reclaim the 944-hectare area in Bacoor, which, she lamented, was close to the protected Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park.

The project, she said, could endanger the wetland.

The senator, who also chairs the Senate environment and natural resources committee, worked for the declaration of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park as a protected area under the Republic Act 11038 which expanded the National Integrated Protected Areas System. It was signed into law June last year.

At the hearing, she also recalled filing petitions before the Supreme Court to stop reclamation projects that could affect the park.

"You want me to go file a petition for Writ of Kalikasan, and you want me to do this again, after spending almost 10 years to stop reclamation, now you are going to do another reclamation in front of us?"

Villar said she was convinced by former Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson to prevent the said Bacoor reclamation plan.

Singson, she said, warned that the project will cause flooding in her bailiwick Las Piñas City.

"Sabi niya sa akin 'Huwag mong ipare-reclaim 'yan

kasi babaha kayo ng eight meters sa Las Piñas... Alam mo ba 'yong eight meters? That's equal to at three-story building. Walang bahay sa Las Piñas na three-story, eh di lahat kami, pati ako, ang bahay ko one-storey, ilulubog mo ako (No house in Las Piñas City exceeds three-story, now you will submerge us, including me, in floods)?"

Villar noted how reclamation projects caused the spike in land values, citing for instance the high property prices within the reclaimed Manila Bay area.

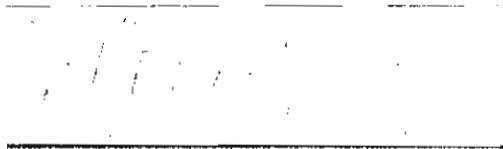
"You mean you will make the rich richer and you will drown the poor in floods? That is not right," she said in Pilipino.

Metodio Turbella, director of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau, said the agency will "immediately" cancel the reclamation project.

"We'll take note of that. In fact, I talked to the Undersecretary [Jonas] Leones, including the good [DENR] secretary here, to immediately cancel that schedule for that purpose," Turbella said.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu was present in the Senate committee hearing.

The local government of Bacoor has partnered with Frabelle Fishing Corp. and Aboitiz for the 944-hectare reclamation project. The plan was among the 22 Manila Bay reclamation projects being processed by the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA).



Reclamation sa Bacoor 'di papayagan ng DENR

Hindi na papahintulutan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang reclamation project ng nasa 944 ektarya sa Bacoor, Cavite matapos tutulan ni Sen. Cynthia Villar.

Sinabi ni Villar na sinabihan siya ni dating Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) secretary Rogelio Singson na kung papayagan ang reclamation ay aabot sa walong metro o katumbas ng 3-storey ang baha sa kanilang lugar.

"Ang mga bahay namin puro mga 2-storey. Nakalubog kaming lahat doon. That's why I really fought na pigilin ang reclamation," sabi ni Villar.

Dininig kahapon ng Senado ang P25.5 bilyong panukalang budget ng DENR para sa 2020.

Ayon kay Villar, ang bahagi ng Bacoor kung saan gagawin sana ang reclamation project ay malapit sa Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park na isang protected area.

Si Villar ang nagsulong na maideklarang protected area ang Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park sa ilalim ng Republic Act 11038.

Nagbanta pa si Villar na maghahain ng petisyon para sa "Writ of Kalikasan" kung itutuloy ang reclamation.

Tiniyak naman ni Metodio Turbellea, director ng Environmental Management Bureau ng DENR na agad nilang ikakansela ang reclamation project. *(Malou Escudero)*



Cavite Reclamation tinutulan: Villar nagbunganga sa DENR

Hindi na papayagan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang paggawa ng 944 ektaryang reclamation project sa Bacoor, Cavite matapos itong kontrahin ni Senador Cynthia Villar.

Sa pagdinig ng ng panukalang P25.5 bilyong pon-do ng DENR para sa 2020 kahapon, kinuwesityon ni Villar ang mga opisyal ng DENR dahil sa planong i-reclaim ang 944 ektaryang lugar sa Bacoor.

Sabi ni Villar, delika-

do umano ang proyekto lalo na't malapit ito sa Las Pinas-Parañaque Wetland Park.

"Kasi protected area na iyong Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park, can you imagine may port sa tabi noon? Para kaming Basico," sabi ni Villar.

Si Villar, chairman ng Senate environment and natural resources committee, ang nagsulong para maideklara ang Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park bilang protected area sa ilalim ng Republic Act

11038.

Sinabi umano ni dating Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson na tutulan ang nasabing proyekto dahil siguradong babahain ang buong Las Piñas City.

"My God, huwag kang magre-reclaim sa tapat ko at tayo ay magakakagulo naman," sabi ni Villar.

"Hindi naman ako papayag diyan. Mag-aaway lang tayo, tigilan n'yo na 'yan. Tigilan na 'yan."

"Mag-reclamation kayo sa ibang lugar but not in Las Piñas, and in front of

Las Piñas, hindi talaga ako papayag diyan. Ano, palulubugin n'yo kami?"

Kung matutuloy umano ang reclamation project, lalong tataas ang halaga ng presyo ng lupa sa nasabing lugar.

"Ibig sabihin 'yong mga mayayaman, payayamanin mo at ilulubog mo kaming lahat na mahihirap? Hindi naman yata tama 'yon,' ani Villar.

"The rich people should take care of the poor people. It's not the poor people suffering to make peo-

ple rich. Tigilan n'yo 'yon, kawawa naman 'yong mga kababayan namin," wika pa nito.

Sinabi naman ni Metodiano Turbelle, director ng Environmental Management Bureau ng DENR na agad nilang kakanselahin ang nasabing proyekto.

"We'll take note of that. In fact, I talked to the Undersecretary [Jonas] Leones, including the good [DENR] secretary here, to immediately cancel that schedule for that purpose," sabi ni Turbelle. **(Dindo Matining)**



DENR sisilipin P300K NA LAUAN LUMBER NAREKOBER SA NORTHERN SAMAR

TINATAYANG nasa P300,000 na halaga ng mga ilegal na Lauan lumber ang narekober ng awtoridad sa inabandonang truck sa bahagi ng Balwhartico Port, Barangay Looc, Allen, Northern Samar.

Ito ang ipinarating ni Lt. Paterno Villarmino, Station Commander ng Philippine Coast Guard Northern Samar, na aniya ay aabot sa 190 pirasong mga kahoy ang kanilang nadiskubre mula sa naturang truck na pi-

naniniwalaang ibibiyabe sana patungong Bicol at sa ilang parte ng Luzon.

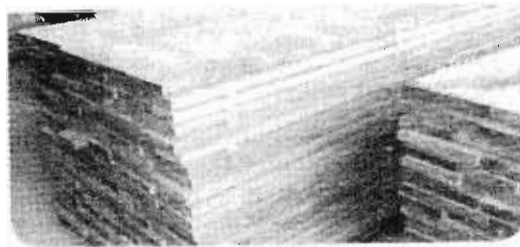
Aniya, posibleng natunugan ng illegal loggers na may paparating na awtoridad kung kayat iniwan na lamang ng mga ito at inabandona sa

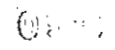
isang lugar.

Kasalukuyan namang nagsasagawa ng imbestigasyon ang awtoridad upang matukoy kung saan nagmumula ang mga Lauan lumber.

Kaalinsabay nito, handa ring paimbestiga-

han ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda ang naturang pangyayari upang matukoy at mabigyan aniya ng karampatang kaparusahan ang mga lumabag sa insidente. **BENEDICT ABAYGAR, JR.**





FIVE CENTURY-OLD TREES FELLED IN CEBU CITY

By Nestle Semilla
@inquirervisayas

CEBU CITY—Cebuanos are mourning over the loss of five century-old trees that have been cut down to give way to a road widening project of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in this city.

Gloria, 77, who asked not to be named, said she was devastated when she saw DPWH personnel cut the trees last week. She said the trees were already at the Barangay Capitol Site way before she was born.

But she added she had not heard any road accident due to the trees. "[The accidents] are usually the fault of drivers," she added.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) allowed the DPWH in Central Visayas to cut four narra trees and one mahogany tree on M. Velez Street in Barangay Capitol Site.

DENR-7 Director Paquito Melicor Jr. said Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu had delegated to the community environment and natural resources

office the authority to issue tree-cutting and earth-balling permits supposedly to fast-track infrastructure projects of the DPWH.

"The DENR came up with the revision after delay in the processing of tree-cutting permits was identified as one of the causes of the slow implementation of the government's 'Build, Build, Build' program,"

Melicor said in a statement.

Endorsed

Before the issuance of a special tree-cutting permit, he said the DPWH complied with the necessary requirements which included, among other things, the endorsements from the concerned local governments.

In an endorsement dated July 19, Manuel Guanzon, head

of Barangay Capitol Site, issued no objection on the cutting of trees. The trees were cut on Sept. 21 and 22 with the supervision of the DENR, he said.

Flak

He said the planting of 500 seedlings to replace the five trees that were cut was also complied with by the DPWH.

The cutting of the century-

old trees, however, drew flak from Cebuanos.

"Who's bright idea is this please? While other advanced countries are preserving their heritage trees, we are displaying our backwardness again by cutting ours down," Penelope Arriola said in a post on Facebook.

Nigel Villarete, an urban planner and environmentalist, said the cutting of the trees did not in any way hamper the traffic flow in the area.

"The traffic flow disruption and the increased danger were introduced by unplanned and unwanted widening at that corner. Everybody knows [I hope] that a sudden widening followed by a sudden narrowing of a road will introduce a disruption in speed and direction as people rush towards a suddenly wide area only to be constricted back," said Villarete in a post on Facebook.

The trees near the Cebu capitol, he said, could have added a "nice, green island in the middle for everyone to enjoy instead of the drab endless concrete we call roads." —WITH A REPORT FROM ADOR VINCENT MAYOL INQ



GONE Personnel of the Department of Public Works and Highways cut down this century-old old tree along M.Velez Street at Barangay Capitol Site in Cebu City. —JOWENCE NIÑA L MENDOZA



DPWH holds massive tree planting

Elmer Recuerdo

MAASIN CITY – The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) field office here recently planted 51,779 trees in watershed areas in Southern Leyte province replacing 1,492 trees cut due to road widening projects in 2017.

The massive tree planting activity replaced the 429 trees uprooted in Maasin City, 418 in Libagon, 317 in Macrohon, 133 in Sogod, 112 in Bontoc, 64 in Tomas Oppus and 19 in Malitbog town.

// A memorandum of agreement has been entered into between DPWH and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regarding mechanisms on the replacement of felled trees.

Southern Leyte District Engineer Ma. Margarita Junia said that as per agreement with the DENR, DPWH will replace each felled tree planted in private or forest land with 50 trees and 100 trees for each naturally grown tree affected by road works.

The DPWH invested about P3.2 million for the replacement of trees cut by road projects in 2017.

Also, DENR has identified 9.69 hectares, an area set aside to replace cut trees in last year's infrastructure projects. Plantation of 16,153 seedlings with an allocation of P732 thousand is now ongoing.

DENR has deputized farmers' association of the respective towns to cultivate the newly planted seedlings, ensuring at least 85 percent survival rate. A team from DPWH was formed to monitor the replanted trees.

"Every time we implement projects, we always consider the environmental impacts. We cannot immediately proceed with the construction without properly addressing them," Junia said.

Junia vowed to continue the DPWH's active involvement in different activities of DENR such as tree planting and clean-up drive.



Unfairly penalized

Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. (MWC) are both asking the Supreme Court to reconsider its earlier decision ordering them to pay a fine of P921.5 million plus other penalties for supposedly violating the Clean Air Act (CWA).

The two water concessionaires allegedly failed to connect the sewer lines of homes and commercial establishments to the existing sewage line in the metropolis, as supposedly mandated under the CWA.

However, both firms have raised valid points on why

HIDDEN AGENDA



**MARY ANN
LL. REYES**

the SC should rethink its decision, starting with the fact that the same tribunal had earlier given the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and its two concessionaires until 2037 to complete the connection of all private and government sewerage systems lines to the existing sewer lines, along with the setting up of other wastewater management facilities.

This deadline is clearly stated in the case of *MMDA et al vs Concerned Residents of Manila Bay*, which is better known as the Manila Bay case.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court said: "The MWSS shall submit to the court on or before June 30, 2011 the list of areas in Metro Manila, Rizal and Cavite that do not have the necessary wastewater treatment facilities. Within the same period, the concessionaires of the MWSS shall submit their plans and projects for the construction of wastewater treatment facilities in all the aforesaid areas and the completion period for said facilities, which shall not go beyond 2037."

It was also the high court that pointed out that the cleanup of Manila Bay is a joint effort. Neither MWC, Maynilad, nor the MWSS for that matter, can do the job alone of fully complying with the CWA and the Manila Bay cleanup without the other agencies involved doing their part in performing the massive task.

So why are the two firms being singled out when state offices and local government units (LGUs) have apparently failed to do their job under the CWA, while Maynilad and Manila Water have done their tasks?

Recall that the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the LGUs were all assigned tasks under the CWA to carry out the law's provisions. Did they accomplish anything? Obviously not.

Under Republic Act (RA) 9275 or the CWA, the DILG is mandated to order all mayors of Metro Manila and the governors of affected provinces to inspect and determine if wastewater treatment facilities (e.g. septic tanks) are in place in their respective communities. In case of non-compliance, the concerned LGUs shall take action to ensure compliance, the law states.

Turn to B6

P/



Unfairly penalized

P2

HIDDEN AGENDA... From B5

The DILG was also required by the SC in its ruling on the 2011 Manila Bay case to submit a five-year plan of action that will contain measures intended to ensure compliance of all non-complying factories, commercial establishments and private homes to the CWA. Where is this plan?

The DILG and LGUs were, likewise required to consider providing land for the wastewater treatment facilities, of the two concessionaires or their regulator, the MWSS. Have they provided the lots to set up such facilities?

Meanwhile, the DPWH, in coordination with LGUs, was also tasked under the CWA to prepare a national program on sewage and septage management.

The DPWH has not implemented this program.

The DENR, as lead agency responsible for implementing the CWA has not completed drawing up a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) Action Plan, which includes setting the goals and targets for a sewerage or septage program.

Was it not grossly unfair then of the DENR to penalize the two concessionaires through its Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) for their alleged failure to construct wastewater facilities in 2009 and to establish an interconnected sewerage system?

The establishment of wastewater facilities involves the construction of sewage treatment plants (STPs), but the two concessionaires cannot speed up the construction of STPs and complete them in a short span of five years, as what the DENR's PAB wants to happen because simultaneous construction will cause heavy inconvenience to the public resulting from the ensuing road excavations.

Thus, building STPs has to be done in phases to avoid traffic congestion in the affected areas.

Another factor to consider is that the wastewater treatment facilities that the concessionaires have built, so far, would be rendered ineffective in realizing the goals of the CWA if informal settlers continue to directly dump their wastes into our rivers, lakes and esteros.

Again, this is something that should be handled by the LGUs in the concerned communities.

Moreover, fast-tracking the completion of STPs would require a huge amount of money, which means consumers will end up paying much higher monthly water bills as Maynilad and Manila Water would have to adjust their rates so they could recoup their investments before the end of their concessions.

Maynilad, for one, has 20 ISO-certified operational wastewater facilities with a combined capacity to treat 542,000 cubic meters per day (CMD). Since 2007, or a year before the SC issued the cleanup order, Maynilad has already invested P23.3 billion in wastewater treatment projects to service its customers in Metro Manila's west zone.

As of April 2017, it has been operating 20 wastewater treatment facilities, which consist of 17 STPs, two sewage and septage treatment plants and one septage treatment plant. A total of 22,575 new SSCs have been linked to the existing system since 2009.

Maynilad has committed to connect 1,000 sewer services connections (SSCs) from 2009 to 2012 and 4,000 new ones from 2013 to 2021, despite the fact that the DPWH has not yet issued a compliance plan for the mandatory connection of identified establishments and households to the existing sewerage system.

To comply with the SC deadline on 100 percent completion by 2037, Maynilad will implement four sewerage projects over the 2018-2022 period. This will meet the 47 percent completion target by 2021; 11 sewerage projects will be completed for the period 2023-2027 to meet the 68 percent target by 2026; 12 sewerage projects will be done from 2028-2032 to attain the 87 percent target; and four projects will be completed between 2033 to 2037 to meet the 100 percent completion rate by 2036.

Right now, it is on track to complete its target of 100-percent sewerage coverage for the west zone by the end of its 25-year concession in 2037. It has so far completed 20 percent, a significant improvement from six percent in 2006 before Maynilad's re-privatization.

According to Maynilad president-CEO Ramoncito Fernandez, the company will invest P26.4 billion in the next five years to build new STPs and lay sewer lines in the cities of Caloocan, Las Piñas and Muntinlupa, and in Kawit, Cavite. This year alone, Maynilad will shell out about P11.4 billion for wastewater treatment projects.

Once the new and planned facilities are completed in 2020, Maynilad's sewerage coverage will increase to 26 percent. Fernandez said Maynilad would set aside P100 billion as capital expenditures from 2017 to 2022, roughly P40 billion of which will be invested in wastewater plant and conveyance.

Maynilad announced just last week that it is setting aside P200 billion to build 26 new STPs and install 425 kilometers of new sewer lines from 2019 to 2037. Meanwhile, Manila Water is spending P115 billion on its wastewater programs till 2037.

Like Maynilad, MWC is building more STPs, as it plans to spend P115 billion from hereon to complete its sewerage program by 2037.

For comments, email at marcyes@philstarmedia.com



UK firm eyes Vizcaya reforestation project

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

QUEZON, Nueva Vizcaya: With already more than 1.7 million trees planted since it started, a London-based mining firm here is targeting another 100 hectares of land, this time with agroforest and fruit trees under its Mining Forest Project (MFP) outside its project area.

Ian Moller, FCF Minerals Corp. general manager for sustainability, said for the past 10 years of its operation in its host Barangay of Runruno in this town, FCF Minerals has been able to plant almost 2 million trees as part of its biodiversity and tree planting program to support the government's national greening program.

"This was achieved through a series of massive tree planting activities in partnership with Nueva Vizcaya's provincial environment office, government officials, students and residents in the villages of Runruno and Darubba," he said.

This time, Moller said under the MFP, the company launched a new 100-hectare plantation where it will grow various tree species, preferably agroforest trees to increase biodiversity and reduced erosion, and fruit trees for livelihood.

He explained MFP seeks to compensate tree cuttings in the project area where a

single tree cut will be replenished by planting 100 trees of various species.

"In collaboration with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office that approves the implementation of our project off-site, our MFP, although it is quite a huge effort from our group, it is achievable, as we have already planted almost 1.7 million trees in our other project areas," Moller said.

He said the MFP was implemented in private lands in partnership with farmers and landowners using agroforest and fruit trees.

Forester Tito Tanguilig, Penaró-Nueva Vizcaya chief, said the company has already established its tree nurseries in Runruno village for its MFP that is monitored by the Multi-Partite Monitoring Team (MMT) to ensure its compliance with their commitments and mining regulations, among others.

Moller said FCF Minerals provides the

technology and planting materials, including assistance to the workers for three years so the plantation will be properly maintained and managed, and ensure the planted trees will have good growth before turning them over to the plant owners.

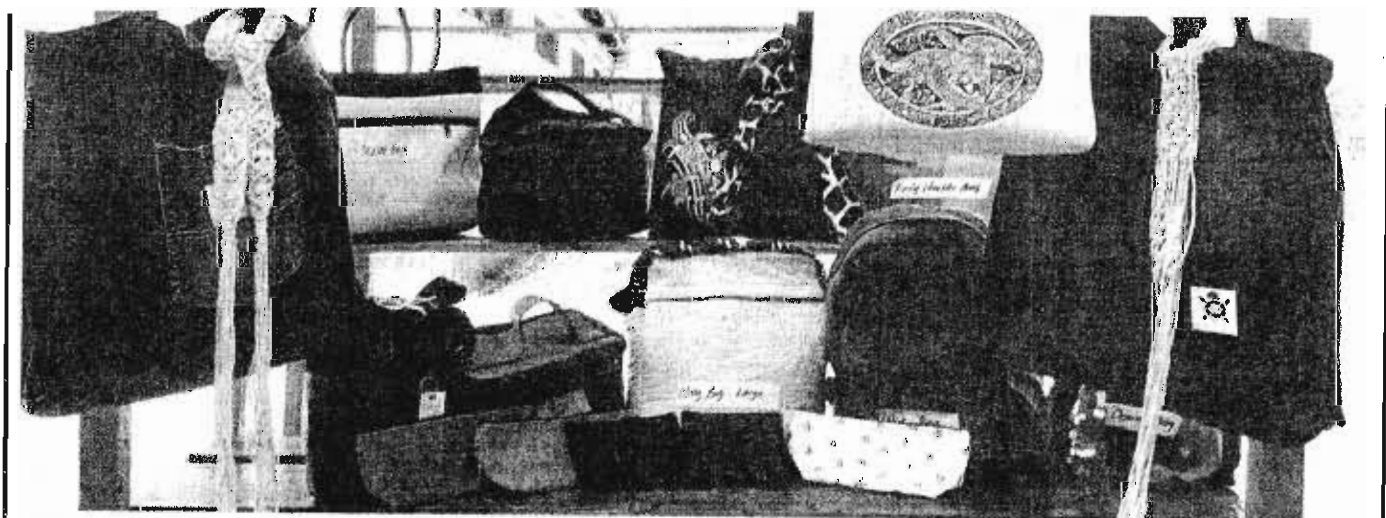
To date, Moller said a total of 196.65 hectares within and outside Runruno village — host to the FCF Minerals gold and molybdenum project — have already been planted accomplished.

Meanwhile, FCF Mineral's tree planting activities had helped them not only in their progressive rehabilitation but also to enhance the forests and if possible, to restore the forests to their original state.

Moller said through the MFP, communities had also been provided with extra income with their production of various crops, technically assisted by the company and sustained through seedling donations and creation of tree nurseries.

"With nurseries already established, FCF Minerals has already donated more than 30,000 tree seedling such as gmelina, mahogany, cacao and coffee," Moller said.

He added that through a partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, they had also trained villagers on seedling production and tree farming.



PRODUCTS FROM UPCYCLING Photo shows products made by residents of Hermosa, Bataan, from recyclable materials sourced from a sanitary landfill in the locality. Hermosa residents are provided with jobs not only at the sanitary landfill but also at the upcycling plant where many of the waste materials are turned into apparel and accessories. Ecogem Universal Inc. takes the lead in upcycling waste materials into export-quality hand-painted bags, pillows, pouches, lamp shades, denim lunchboxes, genuine leather wallets and home decors, among others, which are available from P60 to P4,000.



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Solar-powered water supply, desalination plants for Minsupala

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**

COTABATO CITY — A joint project will introduce solar-powered sources of water for drinking and irrigation in all remote, off-grid and island communities in Minsupala — an old tag for Mindanao, Sulu archipelago and Palawan.

The Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) and an Israeli agricultural firm, in collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), have agreed to design a technical and financial plan to provide Minsupala villages with water supply and desalination plants powered by solar energy.

Dubbed the Mindanao Rural Water Supply Program (MinDAWater), the project is espoused by MinDA Chairman Secretary Manny Piñol and DILG Secretary Eduardo Año following an arrangement with the LG Group, an international agricultural firm.

In a statement, Piñol said the project will be funded with an initial \$500-million loan which could be accessed by local government units at concessional rates through local banks.

"We are designing a new scheme in the financing of LGU projects where they could access loan funds through a partnership between the foreign funders and local banks," he said.

Last Wednesday, the MinDA chief

and his technical staff met in Davao City anew with officials of the LR Group, and discussed the details of the program.

The LR Group is the same entity that offered to build 6,200 units of solar-powered irrigation systems with a backup financing payable in 15 years with a three-year grace period, a MinDA statement said.

It established two proto-types of solar-powered irrigation units linked to a computer system and equipped with a "fertigation tank" in Lumban, Laguna, when Piñol was secretary of the Department of Agriculture, the statement said.

As soon as the financial and technical package of the MinDAWater program is finalized, local government units all over Mindanao and Palawan will be invited to the roll-out and project implementation scheduled this year.



'China has greater stake in ensuring SCS peace, stability'

By HELEN FLORES

With much of Chinese trade passing through the South China Sea, Beijing has a "greater stake" in ensuring peace and stability in the major sealane than any other nation, its envoy has said.

Speaking at the 70th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China in Makati City Thursday night, Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua also said Beijing remains committed to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea.

"More than 60 percent of China's foreign trade and energy supplies pass through the South China Sea, so China has a greater stake in safeguarding the peace and stability of the South China Sea than any other country," Zhao said.

The Chinese ambassador said his government "would like to work together with the Philippines" and "give full play to existing mechanisms such as the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea (BCM) and Joint Coast Guard Committee (JCGC) to properly manage our differences."

"We would also like to make concerted efforts with the Philippines to promote substantial progress of the joint exploration of oil and gas," he added.

Zhao said Beijing would also continue to support the Philippines as country coordinator of China-ASEAN dialogue relations and hopes for the conclusion of the Code of Conduct (COC) consultations during its tenure.

The COC, he said, aims to

turn the South China Sea into a sea of peace, friendship and prosperity.

Zhao said China is committed to being "a good neighbor, a good partner, a good friend of the Philippines."

"It is our belief that South China Sea issue is not the sum total of China-Philippines relations, nor disputes the sum total of South China Sea issue," he maintained.

He said China is now the largest export market of Philippine bananas, bringing income of \$345 million to local banana growers.

He added that China is ready to send experts to the Philippines to transfer agricultural and fishery technology, "so the Philippine farmers and fishermen can directly enjoy the dividends of China-Philippines relations."



Bridging communities toward a climate-resilient Philippines

(Below is the first of two parts of the presentation delivered during *The Manila Times*' 3rd Annual Philippine Model Cities and Municipalities with the theme "Building Better Landscapes for the Next Generation" held at New World Manila Bay Hotel on Wednesday.)



ALL ABOUT CHOICES

LUDWIG O. FEDERIGAN

WE are grateful to *The Manila Times*' President and Chief Executive Officer Dante "Klink" Ang 2nd for being part of this year's celebration.

➤ All about choices B8

Our honorable city and municipal mayors, fellow workers in government, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.

The imperative for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort to fight and build community resilience against climate change has never been more pronounced than ever.

The Philippines, in the 2019 Global Climate Risk Index by Germanwatch, ranked fifth among countries most affected by climate change from 1998 to 2017. Within these two decades, the country lost an annual average of 0.5 percent of its gross domestic product due to climate change impacts.

Moreover, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, the observed temperature in the country is rising at an average rate of 0.1 degrees Celsius (C) per decade and is projected to increase by as much as 0.9 C to 2.3 C by 2050, entailing drastic changes in weather patterns, increase in frequency, intensity and duration of floods, and droughts in the face of climate change.

Major changes in patterns and distribution of rainfall suggest a decrease by 2020 in most parts of the country ex-

cept Luzon, and an increase in the number of days with heavy rainfall by year 2020 and 2050.

Sea level rise in the country is projected to be at 60 centimeters (cm) or three times the global average of 19 cm, with about 60 percent of our local government units at risk of storm surges, flash floods and saltwater intrusion.

Just last month, the Department of Health issued a national epidemic alert on dengue, following reports of 142,062 dengue cases in the country within the first seven months of this year, a sharp increase by 98 percent compared to the same period in 2018.

It is considered that dengue carrying mosquitoes naturally thrive in tropical and sub-tropical climates, but various studies point out that climate change is linked to the surge of dengue and potentially other vector-borne diseases, as rising temperatures may lead to longer transmission, and stronger rainfall and flooding may facilitate breeding, leading to a greater number of human infections.

Despite this bleak scenario, I remain positive that the Philippines can exercise leadership in climate change adaptation and be regarded as a model of resilience.

Climate Change Commission's Communities for Resilience Program

While we already have the policies in place to enhance the adaptive capacities of our local communities, the commission, exercising its mandate, ensures that all policies and programs of communities address the gaps in local data and science on climate risks and hazards to guide local action as we pave the way toward resilience.

Local development plans, such as the Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP) and the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan, which are the task of our laws, find their nexus in profiling and understanding the local prevalence of risk, defined through risk assessment and informed by the latest climate projections.

Capacity building of local government units (LGUs), therefore, becomes key to strengthening our national strategies and actions. Moreover, when their local plans are well founded on climate science and risk reduction policies, they ensure strong risk governance and sustainable investments at all levels.

To this end, the Communities for Resilience, or CORE, Program of the Climate Change Commission endeavors to build the capacities of local governments through higher educational institutions and state universities and colleges as mentors and facilitators in enhancing the knowledge of local

government officials and planning officers on climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction.

Faculty members from higher education institutions across the country have been honed as trainers from 2016 to 2018 using the CORE Training Modules for risk science-based local development planning. It includes modules on greenhouse gas inventory and climate change expenditure tagging, critical processes for determining gaps in climate actions and financing at the local level.

Enabling LGUs to deliver on the task of the law: LCCAP. Since the launch of the CORE Program, the number of LCCAPs in place grew from 137 in 2015 to 1,191 this year — a ten-fold exponential increase in three years. I was told that no other country in the world is like the Philippines in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, through the years of implementing the CORE Program, we have advocated for LCCAPs to deliver on five key result areas:

– First, strengthening local risk governance — to fully understand prevailing risks and focus local actions and investments at reducing them;

– Second, enhancing the resilience of rural livelihood — to prepare our communities to adapt to the climate outlook and withstand the impact of weather extremes and rising sea levels on people's

1/2



Bridging communities toward...

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lives and livelihood;

- Third, preserving the integrity of our ecosystems — our mangroves, our corals, our forests — to care for and nurture as they protect us from harm and support a healthy environment for all;

- Fourth, ensuring that our indigenous peoples' culture remains rich and resilient. With some of our most vulnerable communities living within ancestral domains, their lifeways must be preserved as well as enriched along with their lives, livelihoods and environment. This is the rationale behind our development of a framework for converging multi-stakeholder efforts for our indigenous peoples through our initiative called Comprehensive Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program, or CICARP; and

Fifth: Strengthening early recovery planning — to fight the disruption caused by disasters, so that our people may recover quickly from any disaster and go on with their lives and continue contributing to nation-building as soon as possible.

Upcoming Joint Memorandum Circular with the DILG on QAR process for LCCAP. In line with our continuous efforts to provide technical assistance to LGUs on enhancing their LCCAPs, we are working closely with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in finalizing the LCCAP

Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Mechanism, which will institutionalize a process for providing feedback and recommendations to local government units on how to further improve their climate action plans. We are set to release a joint memorandum circular on the guidelines for assuring the quality and responsiveness of LCCAPs.

Restrategized CORE rollouts. This year, in order to reach the most climate vulnerable communities, the CORE Program gives preferential attention to local communities in the Yolanda Corridor, to coastal communities more vulnerable to rising sea level and salt water intrusion, and to indigenous peoples whose resilience to extreme weather events are compromised by weak and vulnerable livelihoods.

For our first rollout, we only deem it fit to relaunch the CORE training in Tacloban, the ground zero of [Super Typhoon] "Yolanda." We also held the CORE LCCAP Training for Coastal Communities in Albay.

Local chief executives of participating municipalities and cities for both rollouts signed a declaration recognizing the prevailing climate emergency in the country and conveying a collective resolve to rise to the climate challenge. *(To be concluded next week.)*



Pope Francis: Climate change a social justice issue

By JANVIC MATEO

UNITED NATIONS – The problem of climate change is a social justice issue that needs to be addressed not just by the world governments but by civil society as a whole, according to Pope Francis.

The pope, in his video message at the opening of the Climate Action Summit at the United Nations headquarters here in New York earlier this week, described climate change as one of the most serious and worrying phenomena of our time.

"The problem of climate change is related to issues of ethics, equity and social justice. The current situation of environmental degradation is connected with the human, ethical and social degradation that we experience every day,"

he said.

"This forces us to think about the meaning of our models of consumption and production, and the processes of education and awareness, to make them consistent with human dignity," he added.

He noted that the commitments made by governments are still very weak and not enough to achieve the objectives set by the historic Paris climate agreement signed in 2015.

"While the situation is not good and the planet is suffering, the window of opportunity is still open," he said.

"Let us not let it close. Let us open it with our determination to cultivate integral human development, to ensure a better life for future generations," he added.

Francis said the world is

facing a "challenge of civilization" in favor of the common good, noting that a multiplicity of solutions are available both on a personal and societal level.

He stressed the need to cultivate three great moral qualities – honesty, responsibility and courage – in addressing the issue of climate change.

"Along with so many initiatives, not only by governments but by civil society as a whole, it is necessary to ask whether there is a real political will to allocate greater human, financial and technological resources to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and to help the poorest and most vulnerable populations who suffer the most," he said.

"Although the post-industrial period may well be remembered as one of the most

irresponsible in history, nonetheless there is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the 21st century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities," added the leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

Climate action

UN Secretary General António Guterres this week gathered world leaders for a historic Climate Action Summit aimed at securing additional commitments on efforts to address the climate crisis.

Some 60 leaders from governments, civil society and the private sector spoke during the summit, which was held before the high-level general debates of the UN General Assembly.

Among the speakers was 16-year-old Swedish climate

activist Greta Thunberg, who delivered an impassioned speech accusing world leaders of inaction in the face of climate change.

Throughout the week, reports from various experts highlighted the worsening climate change problem.

A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change revealed that over a billion people worldwide, including Filipinos living in coastal zones, may be affected by the impact of climate change on oceans and on ice-covered parts of the planet.

It said continuing increase of global temperature would result in warmer, more acidic and less productive oceans; melting glaciers and ice sheets that cause sea level to rise; and more severe coastal extreme events.

Those at risk include inhabitants of high mountain regions, low-lying regions, coastal areas, the Arctic region and the small island developing states.

A separate report of leading scientific organizations, including the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, also revealed that climate change has continued to accelerate in recent years despite global efforts to curb carbon emissions that contribute to temperature increase.

A report by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent also estimated that 150 million people around the world may need humanitarian aid every year by 2030 if no action is taken to address the climate crisis.



Germany's climate-stressed trees face another threat: Bugs

WELZOW, Germany—Germany's forests have long been treasured by its people, so the country has reacted with alarm and dismay as a beetle infestation has turned climate-stressed woodlands into brown ecological graveyards.

After two unusually hot summers in a row, vast patches of the forests mythologized by medieval fairy tales, Goethe's writings and Romantic painters have turned into tinder-dry dead zones.

Given the scale of the threat to the one third of German territory covered by trees, Chancellor Angela Merkel's government convened a "national forest summit" on Wednesday.

There Agriculture Minister Julia Kloeckner pledged 800 million euros (about \$880 million) in federal and state funds over four years to restore the 180,000 hectares of forest destroyed by drought and pests as well as storms and fires—the equivalent of 250,000 football pitches.

The chief culprit has been the tiny bark beetle, which has gone on a rampage as trees in water-starved habitats have lost their natural defenses.

In vast parts of Germany, like Welzow forest 100 kilometers south of Berlin, once healthy trees have become defoliated skeletons, their trunks marked by

tell-tale networks of tiny tunnels.

"The insect eats the bark and lays eggs inside," said forest ranger Arne Barkhausen. "The larvae then start to eat the trunk and block the nutrient pathways of the tree, which dies in about four weeks."

The die-off has been front-page news in Germany, where millions enjoy regular walks in the woods and forester Peter Wohlleben's book "The Hidden Life of Trees" became a runaway best-seller.

The worst forest crisis since the acid rain of the 1980s has come as climate change has shot to the top of the political agenda, highlighting the value of

forests not just as water filters and biodiversity hotspots but also as natural carbon sinks.

Hectares of spruce and pine, beech and oak forest have fallen victim to the pest in Bavaria, Thuringia and other states.

In Saxony, the German army was even called in this month to help overwhelmed foresters clear dead trees in what state authorities labeled an "unparalleled disaster".

Germany boasts 90 billion trees, according to the latest survey from 2012. About 1.1 million people work in forestry and related sectors, more than in the automotive industry. **AFP**



Haribon Calls for biodiversity conservation

CLIMATE change is not an issue separate from biodiversity loss, as one inevitably affects the other.

Haribon Foundation reiterated this in a position paper as it expressed its solidarity with millions of people across the planet at the global Climate Strike to demand immediate and concrete actions from every individual, especially the decision-makers, to provide solutions to the worsening climate emergency.

As 16-year-old Greta Thunberg resoundingly urges, all sectors should "act as if our house is on fire," Haribon said.

In discussing the how climate change is linked closely to biodiversity loss, Haribon cited how the destruction, degradation, and loss of forests over the past decades have dramatically increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, amplifying the greenhouse gas effect.

This phenomenon has led to increased global temperature and heat waves. Significant amount of carbon is conserved in natural forests (up to 250 MgC per hectare) and can be emitted to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide gas through deforestation (Lasco et.al., 2008), it said.

Haribon added that illegal, uncontrolled use and blasting of marine habitats such as mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs had also resulted in the massive decline of fish catch and degraded ecosystem services

These benefits from ecosystems include carbon sequestration or the ability to absorb and store carbon dioxide, and protection from floods and storm surges.

Thus, Haribon emphasized that efforts toward climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the protection and conservation of biodiversity must be looked at interdependently.

The inter-governmental panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) fifth assessment report stated that "conserving natural terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems and restoring degraded ecosystems (including their genetic and species diversity) is essential for the overall goals of both the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change."

Since 2017, the Philippines has committed to the Paris Agreement in aiming to increase the ability of countries to respond to the impacts of climate change, and to the CBD since 1993 with the goal to conserve biological diversity, promote sustainable use of biodiversity components and equitable sharing of benefits from using its resources.

Haribon also said that ecosystem services from biodiversity are key to eliminating greenhouse gases and protecting communities from disastrous climate

change impacts such as flashfloods and fatal storm surges.

Moreover, engineering innovative and renewable sources of human subsistence will also help sustain ecosystems and biodiversity for future generations.

Haribon also said despite existing policies and localization efforts, the country must expedite effective implementation of concrete environmental solutions to meet the bar. Our commitments in international agreements demand double the time for our institutions to operationalize and fund conservation programs.

"We are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction," as Thunberg puts it. Our ecosystems and biodiversity are greatly vulnerable to climate change, making our efforts to conserve and protect the environment and everything that lives in it more relevant than ever, it said.

Importance of ecosystems

Emphasizing the role of ecosystem services, Haribon said these are our strongest hope to effectively curb the devastating effects of climate change. "Our constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is founded on our basic human needs such as air, water, food, shelter and clothing — all generously provided by ecosystems," it added.

Haribon Foundation has taken up the challenge to promote a healthier Philippine biodiversity for over four decades. Among its ridge-to-reef milestones on forest restoration, marine conservation and species protection, Haribon and its partners uphold the 29-year-old Sustainable Forest Management Act, also known as the Forest Resources Bill.

According to the foundation, the proposed bill is "undoubtedly the overarching policy solution for forest ecosystem as it spotlights forest protection and reforestation as the forefront solutions to respond to the climate change issue and the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity."

"We are also calling on every decision-maker in all levels to establish, strengthen and sustain conservation efforts, explore sustainable livelihood opportunities, and continuously raise public awareness on coastal and marine management," Haribon said.

Finally, Haribon said the current administration declares that "the environment must be a top priority." As such, every local to national government agency, policymaker, businessperson, electorate and citizen must uphold the environmental rule of law and get actively involved — before it's too late to save our burning house.



569 barangay sa Bulacan sabay-sabay maglilinis

UPANG maiwasan ang pagkalat ng mga nakakahawang sakit katulad ng Dengue, Polio at African Swine Fever, mag-sasagawa ang pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Bulacan sa pakikipagtulongan ng Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) at ng International Coastal Clean-up (ICC) Philippines ng sabayang paglilinis sa lahat ng 569

barangay ng Bulacan ngayong Sabado.

Tinututukan ng pamahalaang panlalawigan ang malinis na kapaligiran, bilang isa sa mga prayoridad sa 'People's Agenda 10' kaya naman hinihikayat nina Gobernador Daniel Fernando at Bulacan 1st District Rep. Jonathan Alvarado ang bawat Bulakenyo, lalo na ang mga kawani ng

gobyerno, na makiisa sa sabayang paglilinis at gawin ang kanilang bahagi upang matulungan, mapangalagaan at maisalba ang kalikasan.

Bago ito, masigasig na ring nakibahagi ang Bulacan sa iba't ibang clean-up drive kabilang ang 'Battle for Manila Bay' na ginanap noong Enero na isang adbokasiyong pamahalaang nasyonal sa pamamagi-

tan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ang sabayang paglilinis ay bunga ng limang araw na Barangay Summit na ginanap sa Balagtas Hall ng Hiyas ng Bulacan Convention Center noong Setyembre 16, 17, 18, 20 at 24, 2019 kasama ang mga kaptan ng lahat ng barangay sa Bulacan. **(Jun Borlongan)**



ARTIFICIAL CORAL REEF INSTALLATION IN BALAYAN, BATANGAS

Soliman "Dexter" Villamin Jr. (right), founder of DV Boer Farm and national president of Magsasaka, Inc., is joined by (Ret.) Gen. Ereck Parayno, spokesman of Magsasaka, Inc., during the announcement of the second batch of installation of artificial coral reef in the coast of Balayan, Batangas which will be held on October 8, 2019. Dubbed as "Oplan Pamamalakaya," the project aims to help small fishermen and continually promote environmental awareness. The event will be participated in by some candidates of Miss Earth 2019 and government officials.





SCUBASURERO Hinahakot ng mga volunteer diver ang basurang nakolekta sa karagatan nang makibahagi sila sa SCUBAsurero underwater clean-up activity sa Bgy. San Agustin, San Fernando City, La Union, kahapon.

ERWIN BELEO