

03 DEC 2013

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# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service

# East Asian countries issue declaration on marine resources

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Countries bordering on the

seas of East Asia have issued a joint declaration reaffirming their commitment towards the conservation and sustainable

development of coastal and marine resources in the region.

Environment ministers and heads of delegation of Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, North Korea, Singapore, South Korea, Timor-Leste, Vietnam and the Philippines adopted the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration as "a reiteration and stronger call to action" to ensure sustainability.

The 11 countries are members of the Partnerships in Environmental Management for Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), an intergovernmental organization operating in East Asia to foster and sustain healthy and resilient oceans, coasts, communities and economies

across the region.

"The declaration, supported by the respective countries' plans of action, will ensure that partner countries will work together in addressing complex issues faced by this region," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

"The seas of East Asia are the most biodiverse marine areas in the world, yet they face severe threats from climate change and densely populated coastal communities," he added.

The Iloilo Declaration recognizes the significant value and critical contribution of coastal and marine ecosystems goods and services to securing food and jobs, helping to eradicate

poverty, and building resilient coastal communities and blue economies in East Asia.

To achieve these benefits, PEMSEA member nations acknowledged the need to protect coastal and marine ecosystems from the impacts of climate change and other threats, including marine-related disasters, destruction and loss of habitats and natural coastlines, biodiversity loss and degradation, and overfishing and lack of food security.

Under the declaration, East Asian countries believe "PEMSEA remains relevant and is well-positioned to continue performing its role as the regional platform to encourage

the development of common policies, building capacity and orchestrating essential collaboration and scaled up actions alongside smart financing to deliver economic and social dividends, as well as protect biodiversity and address shrinking coastlines."

As part of their commitment to sustainable development, the countries vowed to work to achieve by 2021 the remaining targets set under the 2015 Da Nang Compact on integrated coastal management (ICM) coverage of the region's coastlines and the adoption and implementation of ICM national laws and policies in all countries in the region.



# Boracay closure prompts DOT to rework tourism goals

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

**F**OREIGN arrivals targets under the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) will likely be scaled down in the wake of the closure of Boracay Island this year.

This was disclosed by Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat to reporters on the sidelines of the recent annual general membership meeting of the Tourism Congress of the Philippines (TCP). "The targets will definitely change," she said, starting with the foreign arrivals this year. "We were expecting 7.4 million visitors [this year], but with the closure of Boracay, our top tourist destination, I highly doubt we're going to reach that. But it will be higher than last year." Targeted foreign arrivals for 2022 is 12 million, up 81 percent from last year's actual arrivals of 6.6 million.

Not all targets will be cut, though; in some cases, an upward adjustment is called for. She said under the NTDP, the Department of Tourism (DOT) targeted to increase tourism's contribution to the GDP to 10 percent. "Now it's already 12.2 percent of GDP. Then our domestic tourists target by 2022 is 86.2 million, but we're already at 97 million. So these are the things that have to be revised."

In her speech to TCP members, Romulo Puyat said, "We are currently reviewing the implementation of the NTDP 2016-2022, and are prioritizing the improvement of policies on environmental protection, access, connectivity, security and enhancement of tourism products and infrastructure. By the first quarter of 2019, there will be a calibration of our targets in the NTDP."

She added she wanted to consult with the TCP on the tourism products that they may want to "include or remove" in the tourism master plan.

For his part, TCP President Jose C. Clemente III said he "welcome[s] a revisit of the NTDP targets and programs, to make these more responsive to the needs of the industry." He added that it was good idea for the DOT to "update its tourism products in support of the agency's overarching thrust of sustainable tourism."

The drafting of the NTDP 2016-



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## Boracay closure prompts DOT to rework tourism goals



**THIS file photo shows tourists in Boracay during the All Saints' Day holiday weekend trying to capture the sun setting on the horizon. The Department of Tourism may revise its foreign arrivals targets under the National Tourism Development Plan due to the closure of the island this year. STELLA ARNALDO**

2022 was started in August 2015 under former Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez Jr., with its officials regularly consulting with tourism stakeholders for their inputs, several sources said. When this was turned over to his successor Wanda Corazon Tulfo Teo, however, the sector was hardly consulted before it was finalized and presented to President Duterte for approval.

One tourism veteran interviewed who requested anonymity told the BUSINESSMIRROR, "We kept asking the DOT for a copy

but we never got the final copy. We would get just bits of information when they made short presentations to stakeholders, but to this day, we don't even have a printed copy of the NTDP."

The tourism executive said, "they [Secretary Teo's administration] never even formally rolled out the plan. She apparently didn't even want to print the NTDP. Normally there would be a formal presentation of the NTDP, like what was done under Secretary Jimenez, before it is implemented."

**(See, "DOT launches tourism blueprint," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, May 6, 2012.)**

Another tourism leader, who likewise declined to be identified, said "before there is any recalibration of targets, I hope the DOT can first give us copies of the NTDP so we can give our inputs. How can we stakeholders get on board and support the NTDP when we don't even know what it is?" According to an NTDP brief prepared for a Cabinet meeting on April 3, 2017, a copy of which was obtained by this

paper, focused group discussions and consultations with tourism stakeholders were supposed to have taken place from January 2016 to February 2017.

Under the tourism master plan, the DOT has identified nine major tourism products: nature-based tourism, which covers ecotourism, farm tourism and adventure tourism; cultural and heritage tourism; health wellness, and retirement tourism; MICE (Meetings Incentives Conventions Exhibitions) tourism; educational tourism; leisure and entertainment tourism; diving, underwater photography and marine sports tourism; and sun and beach tourism.

Under the NTDP, the DOT is also targeting to increase inbound revenue to P922 billion by 2022, from P353 billion in 2016; domestic revenue to P2.95 trillion in 2022, from P1.8 trillion in 2016; the number of people employed in the industry to reach 6.5 million from 5.2 million; raise the tourism industry's share to total employment to 14.4 percent from 13 percent; and lift the number of poor beneficiaries to 541,000 from 486,000.

Romulo Puyat told TCP members, though, that more than the numbers, it is striking the balance between business opportunities and social responsibilities, which matters most.

"With the tourism sector's increasing influence over economic and cultural development, we believe that it can also be a driving force in sustainable development in the country."



## Forest and trees

By Tony Samson

THE bias for action is critical when dealing with consultants, especially those coming from academe or who have had many clients in one category. While these gurus can mesmerize a seminar crowd, or a board committee with their road map to the future (evolve or die), they seldom bother with how to move their clients from Point A to Point F. They may dismiss such humdrum

exertions as operational issues.

Success goes beyond strategy. And the devil is in the details. The play is just a script until there is a cast and a working sound system, with the hundred details in between, including the catering for rehearsals.

People who describe themselves as "big picture" guys, who see the forest instead of the trees, tend to underestimate the importance of trees. Are they just details or are they what the forest is all about?

**People who describe themselves as "big picture" guys, who see the forest instead of the trees, tend to underestimate the importance of trees. Are they just details or are they what the forest is all about?**

A fancy but seldom patronized restaurant in a low-traffic location may essay a business goal expressed in grandiose terms: to be the lifestyle culinary experience of choice for the trend-setting, high-disposable income set of influencers among millennials.

This kind of sweeping mission statement calls for all sorts of details like where this demographic niche now presently dines or whether they even constitute a defined target market worth chasing. Do they have disposable income? Do they eat in a group? What kind of menu will they find attractive? What price points are acceptable? Who are the competitors in this category and how well are they doing? What kind of chef is

needed in the kitchen and how much will she cost?

Operational details are like that. They tend to be tedious and almost irritating to the forest guy who feels he is being attacked by a swarm of hornets -- let the operational folks figure that out. What we need is a road map...but how do you get to the destination and what form of transport is appropriate? Also, who will drive? How much gas is needed?

The most elusive form of goal-setting is chasing ranking, like aiming to be number 1 in a category. This objective holds a few assumptions. It presumes one has defined the industry he belongs to and who his competitors are. In our restaurant example, does being first include only



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restaurants in that block. If so, how many blocks are involved? Does it involve restaurants in the category of choice, say only French bistro types?

The other problem of ranking as a goal involves defining the category to compete in, whether gross revenues, market share, or profitability. But the most pernicious implication of this type of goal setting is an almost automatic me-too strategy which

becomes the default option. What the present number 1 goes into is slavishly copied and attempted to be exceeded by the challenger with sub-goals like cost is not an impediment in the objective. Poaching talent from Number 1 becomes compelling. Usually, the wannabe ends up with discards and overpay for them.

Game changers like Apple offered products like tablets and

smartphones that consumers didn't even think they wanted, or needed. Leadership in any industry sometimes means changing the rules and redefining the industry category. Can a phone be a computer or a camera? Does Apple belong to the computer industry or the phone sector? It doesn't seem to matter anymore when categories converge.

The category that one's business belongs to is not always obvious. Does a gym belong to the fitness business or health care? Defining one's competition determines the core skills needed to excel. Anyway, in all these exercises, implementation rules. A piece of legislation, say on cyber crime, can be tied up in knots on what it means out there in the

real world. It's the implementing guidelines that make the law workable. Although sometimes ambiguity is an opportunity for side deals.

Even those who accept that the devil is in the details understand that it is still necessary to set goals. While "forest" visionaries tend to have bad accounting habits (it's not a cost, but an investment) they are the ones who change the game, but not always how they intended to. The detailed "trees" people have to get involved. Sometimes, both types just get lost in the woods. ■

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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## Giant 'killer' crocodile captured

The crocodile will be brought to Puerto Princesa City today where it will undergo a gastrointestinal decontamination procedure to determine the content of its stomach

Wildlife experts over the weekend caught a 16-foot saltwater crocodile (*crocodylus porosus*) which, local folk believe, attacked and killed a fisherman in Balabac, Palawan last month.

Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff spokesman Jovic Fabello said the animal weighs an estimated 500 kilos.

Authorities have been hunting the crocodile ever since they discovered the decomposing body of the victim, Cornelio Bonete, 23, near the shores of Sitio Bual, Barangay Malaking Ilog in Balabac last 28 November.

The reptile was caught with the help of the maritime group, Philippine Navy through the Naval Forces West, the municipal government and the municipal police station.

The victim's right arm and left foot were missing while his stomach was ripped off.

The crocodile will be brought to Puerto Princesa City today where it will undergo a gastrointestinal decontamination procedure to determine the content of its stomach.

Fabello said they tried to transport the large reptile from the area over the weekend but failed due to strong winds and waves.

As a precaution, the crocodile was entrusted in the custody of the PNP 2nd Special Operations Unit-Maritime Group under Senior Supt. Greg Togonon and the Coast Guard Substation in Balabac.

Ensign Allison Tindog, the spokesman for the Coast Guard District Palawan, said the animal will be transported to the city aboard the Parola-class patrol vessel *BRP Cabra*.

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# Daily Tribune

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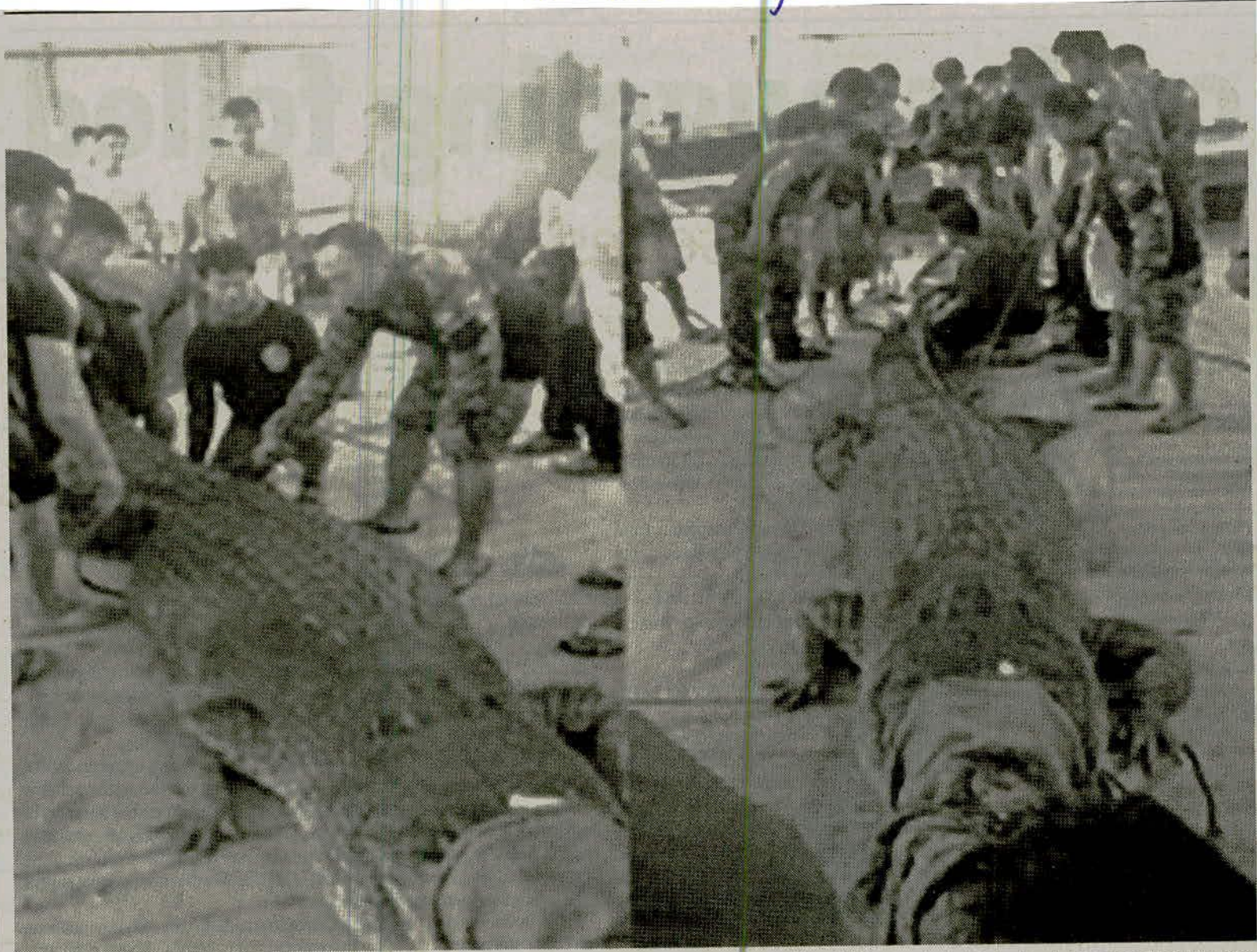
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## Giant killer crocodile captured



**Killer crocodile** This 16-foot saltwater crocodile, suspected of killing a fisherman, was captured by wildlife experts last Saturday in Barangay Malaking Ilog, Balabac, Palawan.

PHOTO BY CGSS BALABAC





## BIR to begin using DENR certification for e-vehicle tax

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue (BIR) said that it will use a certification process used by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to determine whether electric vehicles qualify for tax exemptions.

The BIR issued Revenue Regulation 24-2018 on Sunday, which requires manufacturers, assemblers, or importers of purely electric or hybrid vehicles to provide the BIR a DENR Certificate of Conformity as a condition to obtain exemptions from the automobile excise tax.

Previously, the Department of Energy (DoE) had to certify whether the vehicles met the standards for tax exemption.—

**Elijah Joseph C. Tubayan**

### FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link  
<[bit.ly/DENR\\_Certification](http://bit.ly/DENR_Certification)>



## House bills seek to impose P10 tax on plastic bag use

TWO House bills seeking to impose an excise tax on the use of plastic bags were filed at the House of Representatives.

House Bills 8523 and 8558, written by Sultan Kudarat 2<sup>nd</sup> district Rep. Horacio P. Suansing, Jr. and Manila 3<sup>rd</sup> district Rep. John Marvin C. Nieto, both proposed to levy P10 on plastic bags used in any supermarket, mall, and other establishment.

Mr. Suansing said the tax is intended to discourage the use of plastic bags and help the government develop programs to address plastic pollution.

"By resorting to this levy, it is hoped that Filipinos find environment-friendly alternatives to plastic bags in going about the needs of their daily lives," he said in the explanatory note.— **Charmaine A. Tadalán**

### FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link

[bit.ly/PlasticBagTax](http://bit.ly/PlasticBagTax)

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
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## PH'S MASUNGI WINS PRESTIGIOUS UN, IUCN GLOBAL AWARD

**FROM A1** of a partnership between Masungi Georeserve and the DENR.

The 2018 Pathfinder Award is presented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and WildArk.

The awarding ceremony was held during the opening plenary of the 14th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt in the presence of ministers and decision-makers from more than 190 UN member states.

### Selecting the winners

The winners were determined through a rigorous 2-step process, based on criteria including relevance, innovation, impact and excellence. A high-level jury took the final decision. Out of the four winners, Masungi Georeserve is the only awardee from the Asia-Pacific Region.

The esteemed jury included Inger Andersen, the Director General of the IUCN; Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Egypt; Mark Hutchinson, the Founder of WildArk; Kathy MacKinnon, the Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas; Cristiana Pasca Palmer the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Minister of Costa Rica; and Achim Steiner, Administrator of UNDP.

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Costa Rica minister, presented the award to Masungi Georeserve. "I cannot tell you how impressed I was with [Masungi Georeserve's] work. [They] must continue what they are doing," he said.

The Pathfinder Award recognizes outstanding and innovative solutions for protected and conserved areas, developed and implemented by individuals, organizations, or groups.

### Masungi's solution

The inaugural edition of the Pathfinder Award celebrates solutions that address insufficient investment for protected and conserved areas. While protected and conserved areas provide considerable and di-



Before and After Conservation Efforts at Masungi Georeserve

verse benefits to society, the global funding gap for effectively managing these sites is estimated at US \$30-35 billion per year.

The jury lauded Masungi's innovative techniques and approaches in conservation financing, using geotourism to fund and achieve conservation objectives. Through this model, conservation efforts at Masungi are self-sustained and need not compete with stretched out public resources or grant funding.

The jury noted the georeserve's practices that balance the attractiveness of the park to visitors with low pressure on the environment. Masungi is known for light, temporary structures of local themes and materials, many of them mimicking indigenous flora and fauna, which make points of significance accessible to scientists, park rangers and visitors.

The "Sapot" or a spiderweb-style viewing platform overlooking Laguna de Bay and Sierra Madre and the "Duyan" or an 80-meter rope bridge floating above the rainforest canopy are two of the most iconic features on Masungi's trails.

Besides these creative engineering practices, Masungi's solution emphasizes policy en-

forcement to maintain the integrity and long-term value of the conservation area. To enforce carrying capacity, the georeserve strictly implements a digital timed entry system where only one group can enter the trails at a certain time. There is also a penalty of Php3,000 for each instance of violation to its on-site policies such Leave No Trace, no smoking, and no boisterous noises.

### Innovative partnerships for conservation

Masungi Georeserve is home to a sprawling limestone formation dating back 60 million years, that was the subject of rampant environmental degradation and real estate speculation.

After twenty years of daunting and dedicated conservation work, it is slowly coming back to life and is now a sanctuary for more than 400 species of flora and fauna, several of which are endemic to the Philippines and Luzon.

The project's latest mission is to restore and conserve in perpetuity some 3,000 hectares of denuded mountains around the georeserve through the Masungi Geopark Project. These mountains remain in constant threat of quarrying, illegal logging, kaingin, treasure-hunting, and land speculation despite previous efforts to conserve them.

"We hope this award can inspire others to join our movement. Our time is running out, and resources for conservation continue to be limited. We need to exhaust all possible solutions - from the government, private sector and civil society - if we are truly serious about saving the environment, and ultimately, saving ourselves," Ann Adeline Dumaliang, trustee and project manager of Masungi Geore-



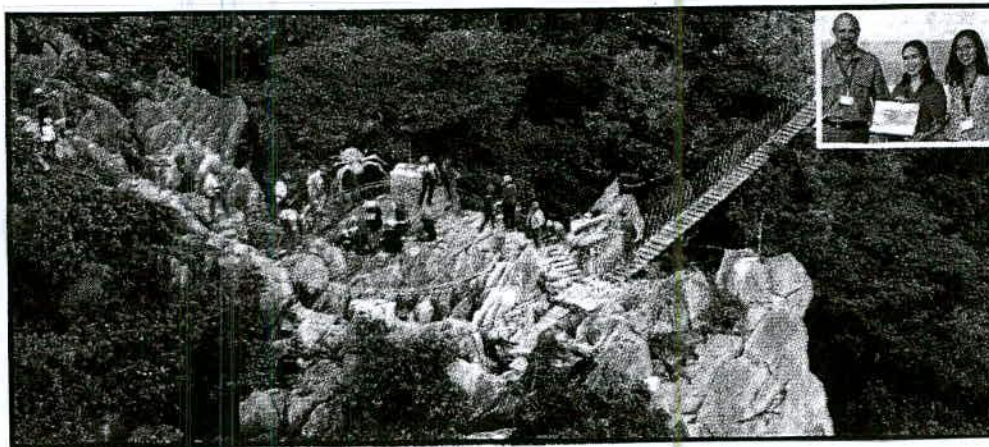
Duyan - An 80-meter rope hammock floating above the forest canopy

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
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## PH'S MASUNGI WINS PRESTIGIOUS UN, IUCN GLOBAL AWARD

SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT—A high-level international jury composed of experts in conservation financing and re-sourcing has selected the Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal as the winner of the 2018 Pathfinder Award Special Commendation for its “outstanding and innovative” approach to conservation.

Amidst widespread abuse of the environment and degradation of tourist destinations, the jury noted that Masungi stands out in its “innovative approach to ecotourism, based on the pillars of conservation, education/research and sustainable development, and using ‘mindful engineering’ through tourism infrastructure that mimics nature, e.g. spider webs”. They stressed that it can be a model for other protected and conserved areas around the globe.

Home to a sprawling limestone formation and unique biodiversity, the local conservation project is the fruit

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# G20 agrees on trade, migration; US goes own way on climate

**B**UENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) – Leaders of the world's top economies agreed Saturday to repair the global trading system as they closed a Group of 20 (G20) summit that saw the Trump administration at odds with many allies over the Paris accord on climate change and issues like migration.

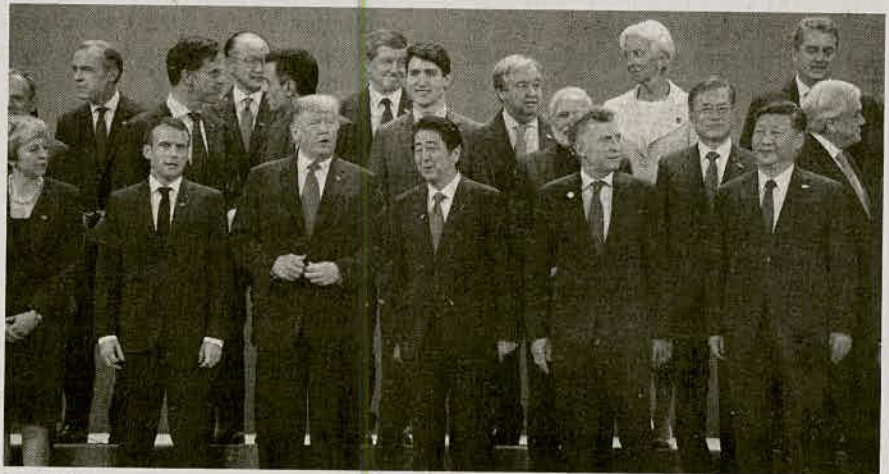
The joint statement signed by all 20 member nations said 19 of them reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris climate accord, with the United States, which withdrew from the pact under President Donald Trump, the lone holdout. The official communique acknowledged flaws in global commerce and called for reforming the World Trade Organization, but it didn't mention the word "protectionism" after negotiators said that had met resistance from the United States.

Applause broke out in the convention center hall as the leaders, including Trump, signed off on the statement at the end of the two-day summit in the Argentine capital, the first time it has been held in South America.

The non-binding agreement was reached after marathon talks by diplomats stretched overnight and into daylight, amid deep divisions between member nations. European Union officials said the United States was the main holdout on nearly every issue. Trump has criticized the WTO and taken aggressive trade policies targeting China and the EU.

But China also pushed back in talks on steel, South Africa objected to language on trade, Australia didn't want the statement to be too soft on migration and Turkey worried it would push too far on climate change, according to the officials.

A senior White House official said the joint statement meets many US objectives and stressed that it includes language



**G20 SUMMIT FAMILY PHOTO** – (Bottom row, from left) Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May, France's President Emmanuel Macron, US President Donald Trump, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Argentina's President Mauricio Macri and China's President Xi Jinping pose for a family photo during the G20 Leaders' Summit, on November 30, 2018 in Buenos Aires. (AFP)

about WTO reform. The official also noted other elements such as language on workforce development and women's economic development and a commitment by China to doing infrastructure financing on "transparent terms."

According to the official, the unusual language on climate was necessary for Washington to sign on, and Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Russia had appeared sympathetic to the US position but ultimately stayed with the other countries.

The final language of the statement says, regarding climate, that 19 nations that are signatories to the Paris accord reiterate their commitment to it while the US reiterates its decision to withdraw. It also notes a recent UN report that warned damage from global warming will be much worse than previously feared, and expresses support for an upcoming UN climate meeting in Poland meant to nail down how countries will meet promises made in the Paris accord.

# Climate-focused world broadcast to feature PH

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

**F**ormer United States Vice President Al Gore will host the eighth annual 24 Hours of Reality broadcast on Dec. 3 and 4, which will explore how the climate crisis is threatening human health.

Gore, the chair of Climate Reality Project, will appear alongside some of the world's most recognized celebrities, elected officials, and thought leaders in this year's broadcast titled "24 Hours of Reality: Protect Our Planet, Protect Ourselves."

On Tuesday, Dec. 4 at 3 p.m. (Philippine time), the broadcast will feature the Philippines, which is vulnerable to typhoons and has suffered from the devastating health impacts of the climate crisis.

The hour will feature a live presentation by Gore, interviews with health care officials, and a look at the battle to shut down a proposed new coal-fired power plant.

"Our health depends on the health of the planet," Gore said.

"The climate crisis is not an abstract issue; it has direct impacts on us and the people we love the most. I'm looking forward to exploring the climate and health connection on this year's 24

Hours broadcast and to discussing how we can take bold and ambitious action to ensure that future generations can live long, healthy lives full of opportunity and promise," he added.

Since last month's release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius underscored the need for a rapid transition away from fossil fuels to limit the worst impacts of the climate crisis, the world has been focused on what a warming earth means for the human race.

Climate Reality said more people are beginning to see how fossil-fueled climate change leads to growing health threats from increasingly dangerous storms to spreading diseases to shrinking food and water supplies.

24 Hours of Reality: Protect Our Planet, Protect Ourselves will bring the world together to explore these many threats and highlight the clean energy solutions that can help us create a healthier, more prosperous future for us all.

"Solving the climate crisis is no longer just about creating a healthier, better world for future generations. It's also about making sure that the people on Earth today – our family, friends, and

neighbors – can live without serious and existential threats to public health," Climate Reality President and CEO Ken Berlin said.

"The good news is that clean energy solutions are here now. A transition to renewable energy isn't just good for our economy; it's necessary for the health and well-being of billions around the world," Berlin added.

"It is our moral obligation to lead the country to a more sustainable path and achieve the 1.5-degree global warming limit under the Paris Agreement," Rodne Galicha, country manager of the Climate Reality Project Philippines said.

Produced by Peter Green, Danielle Addair and Steve Addair of Shoulder Hill Entertainment, 24 Hours of Reality will air live from Los Angeles beginning on December 3 at 9 p.m. EST/6 p.m. PST (Tuesday, December 4 at 11 a.m. Philippine time).

The show will travel around the globe, highlighting unique regional health impacts and celebrating local, national, and international efforts to implement meaningful climate solutions.

The program will also broadcast two hours live from locations in China and India.



## SunAsia estimates up to \$1M per MW for floating solar energy system

SUNASIA Energy, Inc. expects an investment of around \$850,000 to \$1 million per megawatt (MW) for the floating solar energy system it plans to install on Laguna Lake with a French partner, its top official said.

"*Mas mataas ang installation cost ng floating solar* (The installation cost of floating solar is higher)," said Tetchi C. Capellan, president and chief executive officer of SunAsia Energy, Inc. in a chance interview.

"It can range from \$850,000 to \$1 million depending on the waves," she said, adding that if the lake surface is not as calm as expected, more anchors might be required to keep the solar panels steady.

Ms. Capellan declined to disclose the capacity of the power system that SunAsia plans to install on the lake, saying it might alarm the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA). She placed the installation cost for a ground-mounted solar energy system at around \$600,000 per MW.

"*Lahat kami 10 kilowatt ang pilot* (All of us have 10 kilowatts for our pilot)," she said, referring to another company that is doing a pilot study of a floating solar in the same lake.

Ahead of disclosing the capacity of the project, SunAsia and French company Ciel & Terre (C&T) announced its collaboration to introduce the patented Hydrelion technology in the Laguna Lake project. The project is led by SunAsia subsidiary NorteSol.

Ms. Capellan described C&T as being behind 500 MW of floating solar installation outside the Philippines. She said the technology provider's first project in the country is its collaboration with SunAsia.

"LLDA the regulator. They have to be convinced that there is no impact on the lake," she said.

Ms. Capellan said a previous study by the Asian Development Bank for Vietnam found no harm brought by a floating solar installation on the fish habitat, water quality, and the area's biodiversity.

She said the same study cleared a maximum penetration rate of 10% a lake's total area, leaving enough room for floating solar projects on Laguna Lake's 93,000-hectare total coverage area.

She said SunAsia's NorteSol unit and LLDA had signed a memorandum of agreement for

the floating solar project within the municipal waters of Bay in Laguna.

If LLDA approves the project, the installation could take around six to eight months to be completed, she said.

"*Based doon sa pinirmahan namin sa LLDA, magko-conduct na kami ng environmental study* (Based on what we have signed with LLDA, we will now conduct an environmental study)," she said.

SunAsia previously quoted LLDA as saying that the partnership between the private sector and government is a major step in harnessing not only Laguna Lake but also the hundreds of water surfaces, such as ponds, irrigation dams, and water quarries for solar energy production.

In October, Winnergy Holdings Corp. announced that it had commissioned a 10-kilowatt-peak (kWp) floating solar farm on Laguna Lake within Baras town of Rizal province. It claims the project is the first floating solar farm in the Philippines, thus opening the possibility of using energy from the sun beyond the traditional ground-based and rooftop-mounted systems. — **Victor V. Saulon**



## Asean members agree to intensify integration of biodiversity conservation in development

**S**HARMEL-SHEIKH, Egypt— The heads of the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) member-states agreed to accelerate, intensify and enhance new and continuing efforts, and partnerships in integrating biodiversity conservation in key development areas.

The Asean leaders made their commitment through a Joint Asean Statement submitted to the ongoing UN Conference on Biodiversity in Egypt.

According to the statement, Asean's rich terrestrial and marine

biodiversity, and its resources and ecosystem functions and services are challenged by climate change, rapid urbanization, and continuing habitat loss from agricultural expansion, industrial activities and wildlife trafficking.

They agreed to pursue a comprehensive agenda for transformational change to address the drivers of biodiversity loss; accelerate actions to mainstream biodiversity; and enhance regional cooperation and partnerships to support national efforts.

The joint statement, which

was adopted in Singapore on November 13, reiterated Asean's commitment in implementing and achieving the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, particularly Target 11 on increasing well-conserved and connected terrestrial and marine protected areas; and the United Nations's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals, particularly on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 14 and 15

on protecting the oceans and the environment.

The statement also urged all parties to the CBD to support the Asean in addressing plastic pollution, and for developed country parties and organizations to "provide adequate financial and technical resources to complement national efforts of developing countries."

The Asean nations, likewise, recognized the role of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity in facilitating, coordinating and highlighting the collective efforts of

the regional group's members in biodiversity conservation.

The Asean is composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The UN SDGs are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at a UN Summit. The SDGs build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty.

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets is a set of strategic goals adopted by the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, held in October 2010 in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in Japan, as part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The plan provides an overarching framework on biodiversity, not only for biodiversity-related conventions, but for the entire United Nations system and all other partners engaged in biodiversity management and policy development.





## CITY OF BALANGA WETLAND AND NATURE PARK

# Bataan's 'natural

# outdoor museum'

STORY & PHOTOS BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](https://twitter.com/jonlmayuga)

**I**MAGINE being with a flock of thousands of migratory birds in a wetland and nature park. It would surely give one a natural high, and relieve the body and soul of stress from daily chores. And Instagram-perfect photos.

The park is the City of Balanga Wetland and Nature Park that is fast-becoming Bataan's popular tourist destination.

Every day, visitors arrive in the 11-hectare area in the coastal of Barangay Tortugas to enjoy the scenery and commune with nature in the protected area, hoping to catch a glimpse of the thousands of birds there.

The park is a bird sanctuary frequented by tens of thousands of migratory birds during the so-called "ber" months, from September to December, the peak of the bird migration season.

### Migratory bird site

BEING part of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, one the world's great flyways, the Philippines is frequented by tens of thousands of migratory birds coming from Australia and New Zealand.

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway covers 22 countries and is used by an estimated 5 million birds from 55 different species to escape the colder regions during winter. Bataan, a peninsula, is one of many migratory bird sites in the Philippines.

Birds of different features, sizes, colors of feathers, shapes of beaks and wingspans can be seen at the park.

Little egrets, purple herons, brahmyn kites, peregrine falcon, chestnut-checked starling, white-breasted waterhens, rails, wood sandpiper, rufous-necked stint, grey heron and species of kingfishers, flowerpeckers and sandpipers are just a few of the *ibong dayo* or migrant birds that can be seen in the park.

Credit goes to the thick mangrove forest, the grassland and wetland, which is ideal for roosting, making crows, waterhens, kites, falcons, hawks, pigeons, herons and egrets very visible in the area.

### Tourist destination

ESTABLISHED within an estuary at the mouth of the Talisay River facing Manila Bay, around 4 hectares of the park is already developed for tourism.

It has a parking space, a vast place for children to play on, an information center with assorted articles and reading materials from booklets, pamphlets and other knowledge products about

Bataan's rich biological diversity. It has two concrete view decks and several huts.

The park's eco-trail, a path walk of bamboo poles leading to the heart of a 7-hectare mangrove forest where 15 visitor's huts set, is temporarily closed for rehabilitation. Upon the proposal of the City Tourism Council, the park is planning to replace the wooden eco-trail with concrete stilts and path walk for the safety and convenience of visitors.

According to Alan V. Balbuena, tourism operations assistant of the city, the park is becoming a popular place for family bonding.

"Many are visiting the place now. This month alone [as of November 15], I estimate that we already have 500 visitors," he said.

### Garcia legacy

ESTABLISHED in 2005, the natural outdoor museum which showcases a well-diversified bio-network, can be considered as a legacy of Enrique "Tet" Garcia Jr., the patriarch of the Garcia clan of Bataan.

Balbuena said it was the former governor who envisioned the establishment of the City of Balanga Wetland and Nature Park, seeing its potential as a tourist magnet while conserving and protecting the migratory birds and their habitat.

Garcia, who passed away on June 13, 2016, at 75, was the father of incumbent Bataan Gov. Albert S. Garcia of the Second District of Bataan, Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" S. Garcia III and Balanga City Mayor Francis S. Garcia.



## Sustainable fisheries, ocean plastics and water security

### top EAS-meet issues

**S**USTAINABLE fishing, responsible waste management and ensuring the steady and clean supply of water were among the top subjects tackled by experts during the Ocean Talk and Sea Exchange discussions at the 2018 East Asia Seas (EAS) Congress in Iloilo City last week.

Dale Galvin, RARE managing director of Sustainable Markets and Innovative Finance, discussed how irresponsible fishing practices, especially those being conducted by big firms, are greatly affecting the fishery sector's supply and value chain on a global scale.

He described this situation as a "tragedy of the commons" in which fishermen are left with fewer fish that are smaller and of lower quality.

Galvin also emphasized the urgency of "putting science in fishing" to effectively preserve and protect the oceans and marine species. He then explained the necessity of careful and effective ways of studying how ocean produce could be used in some value-added activities and investments. These wise investments must be done in the fishery sector to avoid inefficiency and waste in the industry.

Galvin also expressed optimism that, with businesses and also governments coming in through green bonds to invest in fishery-related industries, there is a chance that sustainable fishing would soon be achieved.

For her part, Dr. Jenna Jambeck, associate professor at the University of Georgia College of Engineering, discussed the issue of marine pollution and ocean plastics.

She noted that in 1952, the production of plastics worldwide was only about 2 million metric tons. But in 2017 it reached a staggering 8.3 billion metric tons—resulting in plastic wastage of 6.3 billion metric tons.

She pointed out that this is a big problem since the majority of the plastic wastes end up in the oceans, posing great hazards to marine life and the overall health of the ocean.

Jambeck proposed that an in-



**BLUE economy, as a key to economic development and in safeguarding the health of marine and coastal ecosystems and communities, continuously gains attention in the international stage, including in the 2018 East Asia Seas Congress in Iloilo City last week. EAS CONGRESS PHOTO**

tervention framework must be initiated to limit, if not totally eliminate, plastics ending up in the ocean.

Meanwhile, Ruth Matthews, program manager of Water Governance Department of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), deliberated on how water insecurity could pose a three-pronged problem of social, economic and ecological issues.

Matthews cited growing affluence and economic development as key factors that are affecting water resources and supply in the East Asia region.

She revealed that at least 4 billion people live in areas with water scarcity and that 3 in 10 people don't have access to clean water even as 80 percent of global wastewater is discharged without being treated.

Because of these and other related reasons, the water crisis was ranked as "high risk" by the World Economic Forum.

To address the situation, she proposed to efficiently use water resources, coupled with environmental protection and educating the people on how to utilize it.

Some 1,000 local and international delegates attended the 2018 EAS Congress, a triennial event widely recognized as a platform for dialogue, knowledge-exchange, strategic action, partnership building and cooperation in support of the region's common vision of sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia. The theme for this year's conference is "25 Years of Partnerships for Healthy Oceans, People and Economies: Moving as One with the Global Ocean Agenda."

This is the second time that the Philippines, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is hosting the congress in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, Global Environment Facility, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (Pemsea) and the provincial and city governments of Iloilo.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the EAS Congress is an "opportune time to strengthen partnerships in the region" through the sharing of initiatives and best practices on integrated



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coastal and river management that will help manage and protect marine life and promote a "blue economy."

Cimatu added that "a blue economy does not only consider business revenues. More importantly, it considers how the proper use and care of marine resources can provide employment and food security to many people."

Pemsea Executive Director Aimee T. Gonzales emphasized the value of the EAS Congress to the Philippines. "This event is an avenue to demonstrate Philippine leadership and efforts in sustainable coastal and ocean development at the local and national level, and Philippine contributions to the UN SDGs," she said.

Gonzales added that the EAS will enable the Philippines to share its initiatives, achievements and challenges through the conference sessions, and develop new partnership initiatives with delegates from within and outside the region. Since 63 percent of the attendees are international participants, the EAS can also contribute to the local economy and showcase the culture and islands of Iloilo and Guimaras.



## COMMONSENSE

MARICHU A. VILLANUEVA

### Water issues

While we were in a media briefing trip on a private sector-led water treatment and distribution project in Panglao island resort in Bohol last week, we learned about the presence there also of top-level government inspection team. It was the inter-agency task force created earlier this year by President Rodrigo Duterte to protect and preserve all the country's major tourist destinations such as the Panglao island resort.



After completing their maiden mission in Boracay island in Aklan, the inter-agency task force swopped down last week in Panglao and then to El Nido in Palawan one after the other. The task force is composed of Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu, and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año.

Making their "surprise" inspection trips in Panglao and El Nido, the task force threatens to take drastic actions, including closure of specific non-compliant establishments. The task force found out to their dismay that the beach waters of both island resorts were positive for "very high" level of coliform.

A Google search defined coliform as a broad class of bacteria found in our environment, including the feces of man and other warm-blooded animals. The presence of coliform bacteria in drinking water may indicate a possible presence of harmful, disease-causing organisms if ingested by a human or upon contact with skin.

Why the task force stopped short though of "a la Boracay" closure of the entire island resorts in Panglao and El Nido? What gives?

The creation of the inter-agency task force was the offshoot of President Duterte's decision to close down Boracay. More popularly known for its white sand beaches and clear blue crystal waters, the President deplored what Boracay had become into what he called a "cesspool" from years of environmental degradation.

With the full backing of President Duterte, the task force went hard after establishments operating in Boracay that have flagrantly violated through these years the required 30-meter easement from the shoreline, illegal water, septic and sewage connections, and non-compliance of other national and local environmental laws. The Chief Executive closed down Boracay starting April for more than six months.

During that period, foreign and local tourists were kept from going there while the task force implemented drastic rehabilitation and strict enforcement of national and local environmental laws. To date, around 200 establishments—after getting the task force approval of their being compliant with environmental and other national and local laws—are now back in business following the reopening of Boracay to all tourists.

**Why the task force stopped short though of "a la Boracay" closure of the entire island resorts in Panglao and El Nido? What gives?**

Fresh from their maiden mission in the Boracay rehabilitation, the task force flew to Panglao last November 26-27. Their trip there coincided with President Duterte's inauguration of the newly completed Panglao International Airport that will usher in a greater number of foreign and local tourists going to their world famous diving spots, white sand beaches, and Bohol's pride—the Chocolate Hills and tarsiers.

In a radio interview, Romulo-Puyat bared the coliform count at Alona Beach in Panglao and Buena Suerte Beach in El Nido was 16,000 most probable number (mpn) and 1,300 mpn, respectively. The coliform level found is much higher than the normal water quality of 100 mpn. According to her, the task force already informed the respective local government officials to ban swimming in specific beaches in both Panglao and El Nido where dangerous coliform levels were found.

As agreed during their meeting with the local government officials in Panglao last Tuesday, the task force agreed to a "no total closure for tourist attractions" except for those tourism-oriented establishments that are non-compliant with environmental laws. As done to Boracay, the task force will oversee the rehabilitation works in both Panglao and El Nido at the same time.

At El Nido, Puyat disclosed, they were informed by the local government officials about the closure orders issued already to more than 22 establishments found violating specific national and local environmental laws. But Panglao local government officials proved to be more challenging to the task force because they themselves are owners of some 87 of these establishments.

We had telephone conversations with Romulo-Puyat while we were both in Panglao last week but most of them were off-the-record. Suffice it to say, the political will demonstrated by President Duterte in the closure of Boracay is being tested.

Even with all that natural beauty, Bohol is not without problems. One of its most pressing concerns is the lack of a clean, safe, and stable supply of water. For years, the Boholanos' water came from deep wells. The lack of water has also hampered further development of Panglao Island.

Clean potable drinking water will start flowing to the households through the newly installed underground pipe connections. This is a welcome relief for many Boholanos who for years have suffered from recurring cholera, gastro-intestinal problems, and kidney stones due to the ingestion of unsafe water due to poor water treatment facility.

Richli Corporation, a private company owned by Bohol-native Richard E. Lim, addressed this problem by building a state-of-the-art water treatment facility in Barangay Patrocinio, Cortes, 32 kilometers northwest of Panglao. They are tapping surface water source from the Malingin River and distribute potable bulk water to other towns that included Bohol's capital city of Tagbilaran.

The P1.5-billion project has an initial output of 10,000 cubic meters of water per day and is expected to reach a peak target of 25,000 cubic meters per day. This is good enough to supply potable water to 10,000 to 15,000 households. The project will be inaugurated to full operations later this month.

President Duterte no less declared every Filipino family must have access to safe drinking water for them to lead productive lives. So water issues are his priorities.



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**LAGUNA LAKE PACT.** Laguna Lake Development Authority General Manager Jaime C. Medina (seated, second from right) signs an agreement for an integrated watershed management program for the Pagsanjan sub-watershed water quality management area. Joining him are Pagsanjan Mayor Girlie J. Ejercito (third from right) Lumban Mayor Rolando Ubatay, Kalayaan Mayor Leni Adao, Magdalena Mayor David Aventurado, Lucban Mayor Celso O. Dator, and representatives from the towns of Majayjay, Cavinti and Luisiana. Inset shows Pagsanjan Municipal Administrator Florante Salvador and former Laguna Gov. ER Ejercito turning over a symbolic key of the municipality for the same purpose last Wednesday. **Roy Tomandao**



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DOT PHOTO

CENTRAL LUZON: MORONG, BATAAN

## Endangered

A sand sculpture contest highlighting the endangered sea turtle was among the events at the Pawikan Festival 2018, held Dec. 2 at the Pawikan Conservation Center in Morong, Bataan.