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SMC, DENR FOR A BETTER TULLAHAN RIVER: San Miguel Corp. president and COO Ramon Ang and Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu recently signed a landmark five-year agreement for the rehabilitation and massive cleanup of the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System. SMC has pledged P1 billion for the project, a crucial component for the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay. The diversified conglomerate has been intensifying its Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability initiatives the past few years as it cut its 'non-product' water consumption by 23 percent, past the threshold set in 2020 under the 'Water For All' project and also discontinued its plastic bottled water business.



Editorial

Ipagpatuloy ang paglilinis sa maruming Manila Bay

MULA nang umpisahan ang paghuhukay sa Manila Bay noong nakaraang linggo, nakakulekta na ng 225,000 cubic meters ng burak at basura rito. Matagal pa bago lubusang maalis ang burak at basura pero sabi ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), tuluy-tuloy na ang dredging kahit pa may mga tumututol sa ginagawang ito. Mga modernong gamit gaya ng amphibious excavators, dump trucks at debris segregator ang nag-cooperate ng 16 na oras sa isang araw. Anim na linggo ang isasagawang dredging para lubusang mapalalim ang baybayin ng Manila Bay.

Binabatikos naman ng grupong Pamalakaya ang ginagawang dredging sa Manila Bay sapagkat apektado na umano ang pinagkukunan ng ikabubuhay ng mga maliliit na mangingisda. Dahil daw sa paghuhukay, kakaunti na lamang ang nahuhuli ng mga mangingisda. Kung dati raw ay nakakahuli ng 15 kilos ng isda mula nang simulan ang dredging ay 2 hanggang 5 kilos na lamang ang nahuhuli.

Malaking problema umano para sa mga maliliit na mangingisda ang paghuhukay sa kahabaan ng Manila Bay. Saan sila kukuha ng ikabubuhay. Hiling ng Pamalakaya, dapat bigyan ng pamahalaan ng pagkakakitaan at pagkukunan ng ikabubuhay ang mga apektadong mangingisda.

Binatikos din ng grupo ang ginagawang reklamasyon sa Manila Bay at hiniling sa DENR na hadlangan ang "full-scale sellout" ng makasaysayang lupa. Ayon sa Pamalakaya, 43 ang naka-pending na reclamation projects sa Manila Bay. Sasakupin ng reclamation projects ang 30,000 hectares ng Manila Bay.

May punto naman ang grupo sa ginagawang dredging sa Manila Bay pero ang ginagawang ito ay para maalis ang burak at basura. Sa palagay kaya nila may mabubuhay na isda sa burak at basura. Kung may mabuhay man at mahuli ng mangingisda ang mga isda, baka malason pa sila. Huwag santsain ang paglilinis sa Manila Bay sapagkat para ito sa lahat. Marami ang makikinabang kapag naging malinis ang Manila Bay.



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PH uses 60 billion plastic sachets a year

AN audit in the Philippines has shown the country uses a "shocking" amount of single-use plastic, including nearly 60 billion sachets a year, a new report said on Friday.

The report, produced by the non-government organization (NGO) GALA, is part of an effort to collect data on plastic consumption as environmentalists push for government action to reduce plastic waste.

It contains eye-popping figures: every day, almost 57 million shopping bags are used throughout the Philippines, adding up to more than 20 billion a year.

And that figure does not include the smaller, thinner and often transparent plastic bags known as "labo" — around 16.5 billion of those are used per year across the country, the report says.

The figures are based on 21 waste assessments conducted in six cities and seven municipalities across the Philippines, with the national figures produced by extrapolating from local results.

More than half of non-recyclable plastic analyzed in the survey came from sachets — small plastic packets often lined with aluminium or containing other materials that make them nonrecyclable.

"On a *per capita* basis, it's about one sachet per person per day," said Froilan Grate, executive director of GALA's Asia-Pacific office.

"But on a per year, per city basis, it's quite shocking. It runs into the millions and billions depending on the place," he told Agence France-Presse.

Small portions of products ranging from coffee to shampoo are often sold in sachets in the Philippines, and are seen as an affordable solution for consumers.

But Grate said the popularity appeared to be more a result of what was available, with wealthier consumers simply buying multiple sachets.

"If you go to the supermarkets, it's rare for you to be able to buy coffee in bigger containers, it's all in sachets," he added.

The survey is the first time an organization has tried to quantify sachet use, and the NGO hopes to pressure both the government and industry to take action on curbing single-use plastic.

The report found that where local-level plastic bag bans have been put in place and rigorously enforced, usage has dropped dramatically.

It urged the government to "institute a comprehensive national plastic bag ban that promotes reusable bags."

And it wants regulations on other single-use plastic products and rules requiring companies to redesign products and packaging to minimize plastic waste.

Grate said it was hard to compare plastic usage in the Philippines with other countries in the region.

"There is a lack of available, evidence-backed data," he added.

"That's a problem and is our main reason for doing this [survey]."

Plastic pollution is a major problem in the Philippines, which — along with China, Vietnam and Indonesia — is frequently listed among the world's worst offenders, particularly on marine plastic pollution. **AFP**



PH NAGTATAPON NG 136-M PLASTIC SACHETS KADA ARAW

TINATAYANG nasa 136 million plastic sachets ang itinatapong plastic waste ng Filipinas kada araw.

Nananatili ang Filipinas sa mga bansang pinaka-nagkakalat ng plastic sa buong mundo.

Ayon sa environment group na Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives o GAIA, resulta ito ng limang taon na trash-audit na kanilang ginawa.

Inihayag pa ni Froilan Grate, executive director ng GAIA Asia-Pacific, lumitaw sa pag-aaral na ang mga Pinoy ay nagtatapon ng 48 milyong plastic

shopping bags araw-araw, 45 milyong thin-film bags at 3 milyong diaper.

Isinagawa ang audit ng Mother Earth Foundation sa pamamagitan ng pagkolekta sa trash samples sa mga bahay sa 21 selected sites sa buong Filipinas kabilang ang anim na lungsod at pitong mga bayan.

Target ng organisasyon na ilantad ang papel ng mga manufacturer sa paglaganap ng plastic waste.

Umaabot sa 136 million plastic sachets kada araw ang plastic waste ng Filipinas.

Sinasabing kabilang din ang Filipinas sa mga

bansang pinaka-nagkakalat ng plastic sa karagatan, batay sa isang ulat pangkalikasan.

Naitala ang Filipinas na ikatlo sa coastal countries sa buong mundo na malakas magtapon ng mga plastic na basura lalo na sa karagatan ayon sa pag-aaral ng Ecowaste Coalition, kung saan ang China ang nangunguna na sinesegundahan naman ng Indonesia.

Mungkahi ng Eco-Waste Coalition na dapat palakasin ng pamahalaan ang zero waste and anti-plastic bag campaign dahil habang patuloy ang pagdami ng populasyon sa bansa ay patuloy rin ang pagtaas ng dami ng basurang plastic na napupunta sa mga dalampasigan.

Napag-alaman na mahigit 15 taon nang naipatutupad ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003) pero wala pa ring nangyayaring pagtatalima sa mga bagay na nakaaapekto ng kalikasan kabilang dito ang Waste Segregation Act.

Aabot sa 17.5 milyong tonelada ng plastic debris ang naitatala kada taon at posibleng abutin sa 155 milyong tonelada mula ngayong taon hanggang sa taong 2025 kung walang gagawin ang pamahalaan sa mga plastic na basura

Nabatid na sa isang clean up drive na inilunsad ng mga environmentalist kasama ang Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Greenpeace, at Mother Earth Foundation ay nakakuha sila ng 61.9 percent ng mga basura sa

karagatan at dito ay may 23.2 percent ay mga plastic.

Samantala sa 2015 report ng environmental campaigner na Ocean Conservancy at ng McKinsey Center for Business and Environment, aabot sa 60 porsiyento ng plastic waste na napupunta sa anyong-tubig ang nanggagaling sa limang bansa sa Asya at kabilang dito ang Filipinas, Tsina, Indonesia, Vietnam, at Thailand.

Dagdag pa, tumaas ang pangangailangan para sa mga produktong ginagamit ang plastik pero hindi nakaaagapay ang impraestruktura para sa wastong pagdispatsa ng basurang plastik na hindi agad nabubulok kung saan malaking bahagi nito ay napupunta sa karagatan.

VERLIN RUIZ



Manila lulubog sa plastic sachet

Posibleng dumating ang araw na lulubog sa mga basurang plastic sachet ang Metro Manila kung hindi mapipigilan ang pagtatapon nito, ayon sa inilabas na pag-aaral ng isang non-government organization.

Batay ito sa 'Plastics exposed: How waste assessments and brand audits are helping Philippine cities fight plastic pollution' na inilabas ng Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), sa loob ng isang araw lamang ay

umaabot sa mahigit 163 milyong plastic sachet ng iba't ibang produkto ang ginagamit ng mga Pilipino.

"Year's worth of sachet use in the Philippines can cover entire Metro Manila 1 foot deep in plastic waste," ayon sa pag-aaral.

Bukod sa mga plastic sachet na karaniwang nilalagyan ng toothpaste at shampoo na ginagamit sa pang-araw-araw ng mga Pilipino ay lumalabas din sa pag-aaral na 48 milyong plastic bag, 45 milyong thin-film bag at tatlong mil-

yong diaper ang naiipong basura ng mga Pinoy.

Binigyan-diin ng GAIA na malaking hadlang para sa maayos na water and resource management ang single-use ng mga disposable plastic kung kaya't nanawagan ito sa pamahalaan at mga manufacturer para i-regulate at ipatigil ang paggawa ng mga single-use plastic.

Sa kabila umano ng zero waste program ng mga lokal na pamahalaan ay hindi pa rin napipigilan ang pagtatapon

ng mga plastic.

"The problem is the huge amount of single-use plastics being produced – not just the way waste is managed," ayon kay GAIA Asia-Pacific Executive Director Froilan Grate.

Binanggit pa sa report na may sampong kompanya ang reponsible sa 60% ng mga branded plastic waste sa Metro Manila habang apat na multinational company ang responsible naman sa 36% plastic na basurang naiipon sa lungsod.



MAYNILA PANG-8 SA MAY MALINIS NA HANGIN SA SEA

IBINIDA ni Mayor Joseph "Erap" Estrada na ang Lungsod ng Maynila ay ikawalo sa mga lungsod na itinuturing na may pinakamalinis na hangin sa buong Southeast Asia.

Ayon kay Estrada, ang pagkakaroon ng malinis na hangin ay bahagi ng kampanya ng lungsod upang mabig-

yan ng maayos at malinis na kapaligiran ang Manileno.

Batay sa Switzerland-based IQ AirVisual at Greenpeace's 2018 Air Quality Report, ang particulate matter o mas kilala sa PM2.5 ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) ang sumukat sa mga lungsod ng 73 mga bansa kung saan lumitaw na nasa rank 8th ang Maynila na may $14.3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

na may malinis na hangin.

Ang PM2.5 ay tumutugon sa particulate matter (ambient airborne particles) na sumusukat ng hanggang 2.5 microns kung saan maaaring maapektuhan ang kalusugan ng mga Filipino.

Sinabi naman ng Greenpeace na ilan sa mga pinangagalingan ng PM ay ang

usok ng mga sasakyan at iba pang pollutants na sumasama sa hangin.

Binigyan-diin pa ni Estrada na ang nakuha nilang ranking ay magsisilbing inspirasyon para pagbutihin ang pag-sasaayos nila ng Maynila.

Kasabay nito, sinabi ni Estrada na todo ang kanilang suporta sa programa ng DENR

sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay para tuluyan nang malinis ang iba't ibang daluyan ng tubig.

Bukod sa Maynila, nasa ranking din ng lungsod na may malinis na hangin ang Calamba, Laguna; Valenzuela; Carmona City; Parañaque; Davao City; Makati; Mandaluyong; Balanga; Quezon City at Las Pinas. **JAY REYES**



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Maynila nasa ika-8 pwesto sa may malinis na hangin sa Southeast Asia

Tiniyak ni Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada na mas pag-iibayuhin pa nila ang paglilinis at pagsasaayos ng lungsod.

Ang paniniyak ay ginawa ni Estrada kasunod nang pagkakapwesto sa ika-8 antas ng lungsod sa mga lungsod na nagtataglay ng malinis na hangin sa Southeast Asia.

Ayon kay Estrada, ang pagkakaroon ng malinis na hangin ay bahagi ng kampanya ng lungsod upang mabigyan ng maayos at malinis na kapaligiran ang Manileno.

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Binigyan din pa ni Estrada na ang nakuha nilang ranking ay magsisilbing inspirasyon upang pagbutihin pa ang kanilang pagsasaayos ng Maynila.

Bukod sa Maynila, nasa ranking din ng lungsod na may malinis na hangin ang Calamba, Laguna; Valenzuela; Carmona City; Parañaque; Davao City; Makati; Mandaluyong; Balanga; Quezon City at Las Piñas. (*Doris Franche*)



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3 fast food restos found polluting Mindoro river

By **Madonna Virola**
and **Maricar Cinco**
@InquirerSLB

CALAPAN CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued a cease and desist order against three fast food restaurants here—the first in a series of government action against establishments polluting the Calapan River.

The 19-kilometer Calapan River in Oriental Mindoro province is one of the government's "top priorities" for rehabilitation that will kick off formally on March 22, said

Drake Matias, director of the DENR Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan (Mimaropa).

Since 2013, environmental officials have been monitoring the river's water quality that is currently fit just for recreational use.

"It's 2019 already and yet [the water quality] is still going down," Matias said in a phone interview on Friday.

The EMB initially set the river's water quality guideline at 7 milligrams per liter to gauge the water's biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), or the

amount of oxygen in water needed to break down organic matter.

"The higher the BOD, the more polluted (the water) is," Matias said.

Recent tests however showed the BOD at 9 or 13 mg/L.

High effluent discharge

The DENR said the effluent coming from nearby establishments contributed to the river's deterioration.

On March 7, the DENR ordered two branches of Jollibee and one branch of Chowking food chains to stop disposing wastewater into the river.

Officials "taped and sealed off" the restaurants' kitchen sinks, toilets and faucets.

By EMB standards, effluent discharge should stay below 50 mg/L, but they found as much as 1,800 mg/L coming from the restaurants.

Aside from disposing too much waste water and leftover food, the restaurants also did not have discharge permits and had been warned through several notices since 2015, the DENR said.

Matias said that while the restaurants had a water treatment system, "it was inadequate." INQ



DENR orders closure of 2 fastfoods in Or. Mindoro

By Rio N. Araja

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Friday issued a cease-and-desist order against two popular fastfood restaurants in Oriental Mindoro for polluting Calapan River.

Michael Drake Matias, DENR's Environmental Management Bureau lawyer-director for Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan (Mimaropa), ordered the closure against Jollibee Foods Corp (Calapan 1 and 2) and Chowking Foods Corp. (Calapan) for operating without

discharge permits and releasing partially treated wastewater exceeding the allowable effluent standards.

The DENR official said that such was a clear violation of the provisions in the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

The establishments discharged wastewater that not only threaten but "in fact contributed to the failing quality of the receiving body of water, in this case, the Calapan River, which is an established water quality management area," the order read.

Apart from the closure, the affected

establishments are also liable for fines ranging from P10,000 to P200,000 per day of violation in accordance with RA 9275 and its IRRs, implementing rules and regulations.

"We take off from the rehabilitation efforts done in Boracay and Manila Bay. We are confident that we can also save Calapan River by strictly enforcing the law with the help of the local government unit," Assistant Secretary for Field Operations Reynulfo Juan said.

The DENR warned that it would issue more cease-and-desist orders against establishments found violating environmental laws "soon."



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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DENR issues CDO vs 2 fastfood chains

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has issued a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) against two fastfood chains in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro for operating without discharge permits and releasing partially treated wastewater exceeding the allowable effluent standards.

The CDOs signed by

Atty. Michael Drake Matias, Environmental Management Bureau-MIMAROPA regional director, were issued to Chowking Foods Corporation and Jollibee Foods Corporation (Calapan 1 and II).

Matias said the two fastfood chains continuously release wastewater without a discharge permit, a clear violation of the provisions of the Implementing Rules and Regula-

tions of Republic Act 9275 or The Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

The CDO cited that the establishments discharge wastewater that not only threaten but "in fact contributed to the failing quality of the receiving body of water, in this case, the Calapan River, which is an established Water Quality Management Area."

Cory Martinez



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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HOT LOGS
- Elements of the San Francisco Municipal Police Station and Agusan del Sur First Provincial Mobile Force Company inspect the illegally-cut mangium round logs loaded on a truck at a Commission on Elections (Comelec) checkpoints along the national highway in Barangay 1, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur at dawn Thursday. (Photo courtesy of PRO 13-PIO)



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Illegal lumber seized in Northern Samar

By **MARIE TONETTE MARTICIO**

TACLOBAN CITY - Over P2 million worth of illegally cut lumber were seized by a joint team from the Army and the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) in Catarman, Northern Samar, recently.

About 1,690 pieces of lumber with a

volume of 27,600 board feet were confiscated by the team at Kilometer 17, Barangay Happy Valley, San Isidro.

Lt. Col. Raymundo Picut Jr., acting commanding officer of the Army 43rd Infantry Battalion, said they were tipped off about a big pile of partly covered lumber in different locations in Happy Valley.

The operation is the second biggest

anti-poaching effort in the province.

Picut said the operation serves as a warning to illegal loggers.

"We are sincere to accomplish our mandated mission, and continue to support the anti-illegal logging campaign of the government in order to preserve our mother nature," he maintained.

The confiscated lumber is now in the custody of CENRO Catarman.



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₱2-M lumber seized

TACLOBAN CITY – Over ₱2 million worth of illegally cut lumber were seized recently by members of the 43rd Army Infantry (We Search) Battalion and the Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO) in Catarman, Northern Samar.

The anti-timber operation was conducted under the "Oplan Sagip Gubat," leading to the confiscation of about 1,690 pieces of lumber with a volume of 27,600 board feet at Kilometer 17 of Barangay Happy Valley, San Isidro, Northern

Samar.

LTC. Raymundo Picut Jr., acting commanding officer of 43IB, said the operation stemmed from an intelligence information about a voluminous pile of lumber partly covered in different locations within Km. 10, 13 and 16 in said village.

It was the second biggest operation after the "Oplan Happy Valley."

The confiscated lumber are now in the custody of CENRO Catarman for safekeeping and investigation.
(Marie Tonette Marticio)



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Tighter zoning rules in mining areas pushed

By **MARY GRACE PADIN**

The Department of Finance (DOF) has asked the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to tighten their watch against housing sites near mining or quarrying areas to ensure the safety of residents.

During the recent meeting of the interagency Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC), Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said the government should intensify its enforcement of zoning rules to ensure that there are no people residing in areas vulnerable to landslides and other geohazards.

Dominguez suggested this as top priority in the MICC's 2019 agenda.

"We should put another special item there to work

with the MGB (and) to work with DILG on zoning rules basically to prevent housing or any construction in quarry areas, and mining areas that have been determined to be in a geohazard area," he said.

The finance chief also asked the DILG to hold accountable executives of local government units who allowed their respective constituents to build their homes near mining areas.

Dominguez co-chairs the MICC with Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Earlier, the MICC tasked the DENR to study the process of delineating the "go and no-go zones" for mining applications identified under Executive Order 79.

In relation to this, the DENR and other concerned agencies were also ordered to form a technical working group

(TWG) that will identify a pilot area for the implementation of the updated no-go zones.

The MICC instructed DENR to check the provisions in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of EO 79 and see whether the issues concerning the no-go zones could be resolved by revising the IRR.

The mining council had also agreed to conduct the second round of review of mining sites this year to cover the remaining 15 mining companies that were audited by the DENR under former environment secretary Regina Lopez in 2016.

It also deferred making a recommendation on the lifting of the moratorium on the issuance of new mineral agreements, pending the passage of a bill which seeks to overhaul the mining industry's fiscal regime.

Under EO 79, a moratorium on new mineral agreements

should be implemented until a legislation rationalizing existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms have taken effect.

However, the DOF clarified that while the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law increased excise taxes on mineral products, it did not fully incorporate a new fiscal regime for the mining industry.

The new fiscal regime proposed by the DOF covers other taxes and fees, such as royalty, windfall, profit, and incentives.

The DOF said these reforms are covered under Package 2 Plus of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program, as contained in House Bill 8400.

House Bill 8400 has already been approved by the House of Representatives on third and final reading. The bill was transmitted to the Senate on Nov. 13, 2018.



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MICC urged to focus on zoning rules

STRICTER implementation of zoning rules should be a top priority of the interagency Mining Industry Coordinating Council, the Finance department said on Friday.

In a statement, the department quoted Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez 3rd as calling on the council to work with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and the Department of Interior and Local Govern-

ment "on zoning rules basically to prevent housing or any construction in quarry areas, and mining areas that have been determined to be in a geohazard area."

This would be included in the MICC's workplan for 2019.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), meanwhile, has already been tasked by the MICC to study

the process of delineating "go and no-go zones" for mining applications identified under Executive Order (EO) 79.

EO 79, issued in 2012 by then President Benigno Aquino 3rd, imposed a moratorium on new mineral production sharing agreements, among others, "until legislation rationalizing revenue

► Zoning B2

sharing schemes and mechanisms shall have taken effect."

"Considering the continuing issues and concerns on the identification of these areas, particularly the delineation of Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones, the DENR and other concerned member-agencies were tasked to form a Technical Working Group that will identify a pilot area for the implementation of the updated no-go zones," the Finance department said.

The DENR was also asked to check whether changes to implementing rules and regulations would resolve issues concerning the go-no go zones.

MAYVELIN U. CARABALLO



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Strategic Communication Initiatives Service

Asean activism: Wildlife law enforcement

WHILE aware of the region's richness in biological resources and its impact on global environmental sustainability, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) is likewise concerned that biodiversity loss in the member countries continue to intensify as a consequence of, among others, poaching, trafficking, consumption of wildlife parts and products with results extending to ecosystems and habitat change as well.

The scale of illegal wildlife trade is alarming. Due to the illicit nature of the trade, it is difficult to obtain exact figures but experts estimate the value of illegal wildlife trade at US \$10 to \$20 billion annually.

Almost all wild species, including indigenous medicinal herbs, birds, reptiles, mammals, etc. are traded in the Asean region. Pangolin (scaly anteaters) is the most heavily traded exotic mammal along with the endangered Sumatran rhinoceros, Asian elephant, freshwater turtles and tortoises and numerous rare orchid species. Add to the list the heightened demand for many wild animal species for bushmeat consumption.

A significant proportion of wildlife trafficked through the Asean region is purchased by wealthy consumers from outside the region. Particularly targeted are species from Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar. Smugglers have frequently been caught utilizing transport links through Thailand and Vietnam. Be that as it may, poaching and illegal transit occur in all countries in varying degrees.

Humans are extracting wildlife from forests at more than six times the sustainable rate. This is done mainly through the use of forest trails for transnational smuggling. Increase in commercial logging, on the other hand, opened roads that links forests to hunters of wildlife. National parks are used as trafficking routes too. Increasing affluence in major consumer markets, i.e. China, together with huge improvements in transportation infrastructure are leading to a heightened demand for many wild animal species.



AMBASSADORS'
CORNER

AMADO S.
TOLENTINO, JR.

Fortunately, Asean's 10 member countries are all signatories to the trade-control-and-regulation-oriented Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES). In that connection, the problematic implementation of their respective legislations on wildlife conservation and protected areas to prevent the loss of biodiversity easily comes to mind.

CITES is aimed at protecting species that are threatened as a result of international trade. The target is that all trade shall be sustainable. In other words, no more animals or plants are to be removed than the stocks of them can bear. The convention's provisions apply to the living species included in the convention's list (the CITES species), and to products from these species. It names about 5,000 animal species and 28,000 plant species, including at least 20,000 orchids.

The convention limits trade in threatened animals and plants by banning imports and exports when they believe the trade will increase the risk that the species will become extinct.

The Asean region has, for a long time, been the target of illegal wildlife traders in the lucrative, multi-billion-dollar trade of wildlife in which both

live and processed goods of most species are traded.

In 2005, Asean set up the world's largest wildlife enforcement network addressing the issues of wildlife crime in the region known as Asean-WEN (Wildlife Enforcement Network).

The objective of Asean-WEN is to address the illegal exploitation and trade of CITES-listed species in the region. It links up not only with CITES but also with Interpol and wildlife law enforcement groups in the US. It likewise partners with NGOs like the Asia-based wildlife trade monitoring network known as Traffic.

As an integrated network among national law enforcement agencies, i.e., customs, police, prosecutors, specialized governmental wildlife law enforcement units, other relevant national law enforcement agencies, it is in close contact with CITES authorities.

To be more specific, Asean-WEN operates on two levels: national and regional. On the national level, each country operates an inter-agency task force composed of wildlife traffic monitoring units, police, customs, park rangers, and wildlife enforcement officers. Together, the national task forces form the backbone of a regional network dedicated to battling transnational wildlife crimes.

Law enforcement in transboundary protected areas is also being bolstered by Asean-WEN. The network is tasked to facilitate land and marine patrols, aerial surveys and access to existing military border coordination mechanisms. It especially conducts on-the-job training on effective law enforcement.

With Asean-WEN, the region in the past few years has experienced an improvement in wildlife law enforcement action. Along with hi-tech communication and built-up high level of support, the degradation of wildlife somehow slowed down. Integrating different national legal, administrative and judicial structures is still far-off. However, it can be said that the region is reasonably well, considering the circumstances attendant to illegal trade. The network provides law officers and staff the minimum knowledge required to conduct tasks on patrolling confidently and safely in the Asean tropical forest environment.

In all this, the Asean Center for Biodiversity based at UP Los Baños, an intergovernmental regional biodiversity conservation center of excellence, conducts meetings, workshops and training, and facilitates increased capacity and better coordination and collaboration of law enforcement agencies among Asean member states. It mobilizes resources and continues to forge more partnerships that enhance support for the Asean in meeting commitments to various multilateral environmental agreements like CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity for the reduction of biodiversity loss, including wildlife loss caused by illegal trade.



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Forest ranger, sekyu tiklo sa pangngikil

DINAKIP ang isang forest ranger at isang forest guard ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources nang mahuling nangngikil sa mga small-scale miner, sa entrapment operation sa Itogon, Benguet.

Nakilala ang mga naaresto bilang ang forest guard na si Danilo Atompa, 54, at forest ranger na si Dino Lasaten, 58, ayon sa ulat ng Cordillera regional po-

lice.

Isinagawa ng mga tauhan ng Itogin Police at provincial police ang operasyon Miyerkules ng hapon sa Level 5000, Baguio Gold, Brgy. Tuding.

Nakumpiska sa dalawa ang dalawang P1,000 marked money, walong P1,000 papel na "boodle money," kani-lang mga identification card sa DENR, at isang cellphone.—*John Roson*



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DENR EMPLOYEE NILIKIDA, MISIS SUGATAN DIN

ZAMBOANGA CITY – DEAD on the spot ang isang empleyado ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) habang nasa kritikal na kalagayan ngayon ang kaniyang asawa matapos silang pagbabarilin ng riding in tandem killers

sa Brgy. Guiwan noong Huwebes.

Inabot ng kanyang dagliang kamatayan si Mohammad Resa Ismael bunsod ng tinamong tama ng punglo sa iba't ibang bahagi ng katawan.

Kasalukuyan namang ino-obsorbahan pa sa ospital ang kaniyang asawa

na si Jackilyn Ismael.

Sa imbestigasyon ng Zamboanga City PNP, lumilitaw na papauwi na sana ang mga biktima sa kanilang bahay habang lulan ng kanilang motorsiklo nang tambangan ng mga hindi pa nakikilalang suspek.

Nang makitang wala

ng buhay ang kanilang target mabilis na tumakas mga salarin gamit ang sinakyan nilang motorsiklo.

Ilan sa mga iniimbestigahan ng pulisya ay kung may kinalaman ba sa trabaho ang motibo sa pamamaslang.

VERLIN RUIZ



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Empleyado ng DENR, patay sa pamamaril

ZAMBOANGA CITY
- Patay ang isang empleyado ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) habang nasa kritikal na kundisyon naman ang kaniyang asawa matapos silang pagbabarilin ng 2 salaring nakasakay sa motorsiklo sa Barangay Guiwan, Huwebes ng gabi.

Nagtamo ng tama ng bala sa iba't-ibang bahagi ng katawan si Mohammad Resa Ismael na nagresulta sa kaniyang pagkamatay.

Nagpapagamot pa sa ospital ang kaniyang asawa na si Jackilyn Ismael.

Ayon sa ulat, pauwi na ang mga biktima sa kanilang bahay sakay sa motorsiklo nang tambangan

ng mga suspek.

Agad tumakas ang mga salarin.

Ilan sa mga iniimbestigahan ng pulisya ay kung may kinalaman ba sa trabaho ang motibo sa pamamaslang.



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EMPLEYADO NG DENR AT ASAWA PINAGBABARIL

PATAY ang isang empleyado ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) habang nasa kritikal na kondisyon ang kanyang asawa matapos silang pagbabarilin ng dalawang lalaki na sakay ng motorsiklo sa Bgy. Guiwan, Zamboanga City, kamakalawa ng gabi.

Kinilala ang nasawi na si Mohammad Resa Ismael, na nagtamo ng ilang tama ng bala sa iba't ibang bahagi ng katawan.

Ginagamot naman ang asawa nitong si Jackilyn.

Batay sa inisyal na imbestigasyon, pauwi na ang mag-asawa sa kanilang bahay sakay sa kanilang motorsiklo nang sundan sila ng mga suspek at kapwa pinaputukan.

Agad tumakas ang mga salarin matapos ang pamaril. *(Jeff Tumbado)*



Senado, DA magsasanib vs El Niño

NAKATAKDAN magsanib ang Senado at Department of Agriculture para labanan ang epekto ng El Niño sa sektor ng agrikultura, ayon kay Senador Cynthia Villar.

Sa panayam, sinabi ni Villar na nakikipag-ugnayan na ang Senate committee on agriculture and foods, sa DA at iba pang ahensya ng pamahalaan upang magsagawa ng mga hakbangin laban sa

epekto ng El Niño.

Katunayan, ayon kay Villar, nakipagkoordinasyon na umano ang DA sa Philippine Airforce para magsagawa ng cloud seeding operations sa mga apektadong lugar, partikular sa lupain na may tanim.

Bukod dito, sinabi pa ni Villar na magkakaroon din ng re-scheduling ng pagtatanim ng palay na dapat sundin ng magsasaka upang hindi maa-

pektuhan ang kanilang pananim at sakahan.

"Tapos mamimigay sila ng seeds para medyo baguhin yung planting season para itatanim 'yung kaya na mas less water at hindi muna itatanim 'yung kailangan ay more water," ayon sa senadora.

"Magre-reschedule ng planting season at medyo mag-iiba ng crops kasi hindi naman natin kayang labanan

ang El Niño. This is a natural phenomenon so gagawin natin ang lahat para hindi masyadong maapektuhan ang farmers sa El Niño," giit pa niya.

Hirimok din niya ang mga magsasaka na magtanim ng gualy na hindi kailangan masyado ng tubig.

"Kasi kung walang tubig dapat ang itanim mo hindi masyadong nagde-demand

ng more water. At alam naman nila iyan, they will be distributing seeds then medyo mag-iiba ng planting season," paliwanag pa niya.

Aminado ang senadora na hindi talaga kayang labanan ang El Niño kaya't ang nakikitang solusyon dito ang rescheduling ng mga pananim.

Aniya sa ganitong paraan hindi masyadong maapektuhan ang mga magsasaka sakaling tumama ang El Niño sa bansa.

ERNIE REYES