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IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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Bay 'special forces' tapped

Barangays tasked to clean waterways

**Cimatu: Consider yourselves as the first
line of defense**

By Komfie Manalo

The national government has warned barangay chief executives they would face administrative charges or even dismissal from office if they fail to maintain sanitation in their localities and participate in the efforts to clean up waterways leading to Manila Bay.

This, after Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu described barangay leaders as the "most powerful public officials," as he called them the "elite special forces" in the ongoing effort to bring the heavily polluted bay back to its former glory.

In a stern warning issued during the "Battle for Manila Bay" dialogue with barangays, Department of the Interior and Local Government Undersecretaries Epimaco Densing III and Martin Diño told local leaders they need to comply with the directive of DILG Secretary Eduardo Año to conduct a weekly maintenance of waterways in their jurisdictions.

"If you do not want to do your job, then you should quit (as barangay chairmen)," Densing said, as he reiterated the call for public servants to comply with their mandate of protecting the environment.

"I urge you to use your funds to enforce the law," said Diño, who once served as barangay chairman for more than 10 years before being appointed in national position.

He added Secretary Año had issued show-cause orders to at least 1,000 barangay officials in Luzon to compel them to submit a report on their clean-up of creeks, rivers and other waterways in their localities.

"The majority of garbage are coming from domestic sources. Those are your constituents and you should implement environmental laws. Remember, Republic Act 9003 makes it a criminal act to litter or throw garbage improperly. Violators of this law are criminals," he stated.

During the same dialogue, Cimatu called on barangay leaders around Manila Bay to serve as "elite special forces" in the ongoing effort to bring the heavily polluted bay back to its former glory.

"The barangay leaders and members who are here today could be considered special forces in this endeavor," the DENR Secretary said.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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DILG to LGUs: Strip polluters of permits

By Jaymee T. Gamil
@JGamilINQ

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) directed the 178 local government units (LGUs) within the Manila Bay watershed area to revoke the permits of establishments already found to have violated environmental laws and contributed to pollution at the bay.

In a statement on Tuesday, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año noted that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) since January this year already conducted inspections on the establishments and issued cease-and-desist orders and notices of violations to different establishments.

"All concerned LGUs should immediately act on the findings of the DENR and LLDA and revoke or suspend the business permits they have issued, as maybe applicable," Año said.

"A business permit is subject to the regulation of the state and may therefore be revoked or withdrawn if there is cause to do so," he said.

Interior Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya, DILG spokesperson, said Año issued the memorandum to LGUs along Manila Bay in the National Capital Region, Central Luzon and Calabarzon.

Compliance

The memorandum was meant to prompt establishments in those areas to comply with the National Building Code, Fire Code, Code on Sanitation and other laws.

Regional DILG directors have also been directed to report to Año any local government executives who would fail to abide by the new directive.

As of February, a total of 63 establishments have been reported as getting different orders and notices in connection with the Manila Bay rehabilitation, including cease-and-desist orders, notices of violation of water laws and show cause orders.

Accreditations

President Duterte had ordered the cleanup of Manila Bay following the government's successful campaign to clean up Boracay Island.

In line with the President's

order, the Department of Tourism (DOT) in February conducted express accreditation services for tourism establishments in coordination with the DILG.

The accreditation program was held on Feb. 18-22 and Feb. 26-27.

In a statement in February, the DOT said the express accreditation program served as "one-stop shop" for establishments that had already secured environmental compliance certificates from the DENR.

The DILG had issued a memorandum reiterating the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 9593, or the Tourism Act of 2009, requiring DOT accreditation for hotels, resorts, inns and other tourism establishments.

The DILG memo said local governments must ensure that all tourism establishments in their jurisdictions had complied with and obtained DOT accreditation before starting their operations.

According to the DOT, a total of 6,108 primary tourism enterprises and 772 secondary tourism enterprises had been accredited nationwide as of Dec. 31, 2018. —WITH A REPORT FROM JEROME ANING INQ



MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

DIGGING DEEP Dredging operations started on March 5 on Manila Bay. The effort would involve a total of 28 pieces of heavy equipment and 50 workers on duty 16 hours a day, six days a week.



DILG to 178 LGUs: Revoke business permits of firms violating environmental laws

By **CHITO CHAVEZ**

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ordered 178 local government units (LGUs) covered by the Manila Bay Watershed area to

revoke the business permits of firms found to be violating environmental laws.

DILG Undersecretary and spokesman Jonathan Malaya said the massive abuse committed on the Manila Bay

area would necessitate the full cooperation of the concerned government agencies, LGU, and the public to fully rehabilitate it.

DILG Secretary Eduardo Año had earlier issued a memorandum di- ▶9



STILL A TOURIST DRAW – Tourists flock to the baywalk along Roxas Blvd. despite the restraining fence put up while Manila Bay is being cleaned up. (Alvin Kasiban)

DILG to 178 LGUs...

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recting all mayors of local government units (LGUs) in the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon, and Calabarzon to ensure that all establishments in their areas are compliant with the pertinent provisions of the National Building Code, the Fire Code, the Code on Sanitation, and other related laws, regulations, and policies.

With the directive, Malaya said all LGUs should act with dispatch on the enforcement of orders from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), and other government agencies in line with the continuous effort to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve the Manila Bay watershed area.

He added that Año's memorandum stated that "all LGUs should revoke or cancel permits of establishments found to have committed violations and/or are non-compliant with environmental and

other applicable laws."

"The DENR and LLDA have started the inspection of commercial establishments last January 27, 2019, to ensure their compliance with environmental laws. They have issued Cease and Desist Orders and Notices of Violations to various establishments. All concerned LGUs should immediately act on the findings of the DENR and LLDA and revoke or suspend the business permits they have issued, as may be applicable," Malaya said.

He said that a business or mayor's permit is not a right but a privilege granted by the State.

"The Supreme Court has ruled that a business permit is subject to the regulation of the State and may therefore be revoked or withdrawn if there is cause to do so," he added.

"Let us sustain the momentum of cleaning up Manila Bay. The DILG is committed to doing our role in the inter-

agency Manila Bay Task Force which includes supervision of LGUs whether or not they are judiciously inspecting all establishments in their respective areas," Malaya noted.

To ensure the implementation of these laws, Año further instructed the DILG Regional Directors of NCR, Central Luzon, and Calabarzon to report to him through the DILG's Bureau of Local Government Supervision (BLGS) LGUs and local chief executives (LCEs) who fail to abide by this directive.

In a separate memorandum dated January 24, Año directed 178 LGUs and 5,714 barangays inside the Manila Bay Watershed Area to contribute to the rehabilitation of the polluted bay by organizing weekly clean-up drives in their localities such as, but not limited to coastal areas and/or inland water systems, beginning January 27 – the start of the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay.

The DILG is closely monitoring all barangays and will call the attention of those that do not contribute to the clean-up effort.



DILG to Manila Bay mayors: Shut down violators

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) yesterday ordered mayors of 178 towns and cities in the Manila Bay watershed area to revoke the business permits of establishments violating environmental laws.

DILG Secretary Eduardo Año directed all mayors in the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon and Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) to ensure that

all establishments in their areas comply with provisions of the National Building Code, the Fire Code, the Code of Sanitation and other related laws.

To ensure the imple-

mentation of these laws, Año also instructed DILG regional directors of NCR, Central Luzon and Calabarzon to report to him through local government units (LGUs) any local chief executives who fail to abide by his directive.

Año said LGUs should enforce the orders from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Laguna Lake Devel-

opment Authority (LLDA) and other government agencies involved in the cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

"All LGUs should revoke or cancel permits of establishments found to have committed violations and/or are non-compliant with environmental and other applicable laws," he said.

DILG spokesman Un-

dersecretary Jonathan Malaya said since January, the DENR and LLDA have been inspecting commercial establishments to ensure compliance with environmental laws.

"They have issued cease-and-desist orders and notices of violations to various establishments. All concerned LGUs should immediately act on the findings of the DENR and LLDA and revoke

or suspend the business permits they have issued," he said.

Malaya stressed that a business or mayor's permit is not a right but a privilege granted by the government.

"The Supreme Court has ruled that a business permit is subject to the regulation of the state and may therefore be revoked or withdrawn if there is cause to do so," he added.

DILG warns sanctions vs pollutants

By Elmer N. Manuel

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) yesterday directed local government leaders to revoke the business permits of establishments within the Manila

Bay Watershed Area found in violation of environmental laws.

DILG Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya disclosed Interior Secretary Eduardo Año's directive through a memorandum to all mayors in

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The Manila Bay waters were found to have high fecal contamination which was the reason why swimming in the area was prohibited

From page 1

the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon and Calabarzon to strictly implement laws to sustain the area.

Malaya explained Año ordered "all LGU (local government units) to revoke or cancel permits of establishments found to have committed violations and/or are non-compliant with environmental and other applicable laws."

There are 178 cities and municipalities inside the Manila Bay Watershed Area.

The DILG undersecretary said the memorandum was issued "to ensure that all establishments in their areas comply with the pertinent provisions of the National Building Code, the Fire Code, the Code on Sanitation and other related

laws, regulations and policies."

Año likewise instructed DILG regional directors of NCR, Central Luzon and Calabarzon to report LGU and local chief executives who fail to abide by this directive.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) have started the inspection of commercial establishments on 27 January to ensure their compliance with environmental laws.

"They have issued cease and desist orders and notices of violations to various establishments," Malaya said. "All concerned LGU should immediately act on the findings of the DENR and LLDA and revoke or suspend the business permits they have issued, as maybe applicable."

The DILG is closely monitoring all barangays and will call

the attention of those not contributing to the clean-up effort, Malaya said.

Several establishments near the Manila Bay were earlier ordered closed when they were found to have contributed to the pollution in the waters along the Pasay, Parañaque and Manila coastlines.

Some of these establishments were found to have discharged septic and used water directly into the bay.

The Manila Bay waters were found to have high fecal contamination which was the reason why swimming in the area was prohibited.

In the early stages of the rehabilitation, local tourists have flocked to the Manila and Pasay sides of the coastlines and many, including children, dipped in the still murky water which DENR and other agencies said would take several years to rehabilitate.

Fences were built where there was access to the sea to prevent the public from swimming in the areas being rehabilitated.



MANILA Bay's clean-up continues as tourists swarm the area.

BOB DUNGO JR.



Trusted Since 1938

The Manila Times

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DILG TO LGUS:

'Revoke business permits of polluters'

BY ROY D. R. NARRA

THE Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ordered 178 local government units (LGUs) in the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon and Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) to revoke the business permits of establishments violating environmental laws, especially those that contribute to the pollution of Manila Bay.

Interior Undersecretary and spokesman Jonathan Malaya said DILG Secretary Eduardo Año issued a memorandum to all the mayors of the regions concerned to ensure that all establishments in their area are complying with environmental laws and policies.

He added that the mayors have the right to revoke the business permits of establishments violating environmental laws.

"The Supreme Court has ruled that a

business permit is subject to the regulation of the State and may, therefore, be revoked or withdrawn if there is cause to do so," Malaya said.

He added that Año instructed DILG regional directors of NCR, Central Luzon and Calabarzon to report local chief executives who were not complying with his directive.

This is part of the DILG's program to follow President Rodrigo Duterte's directive of rehabilitating Manila Bay.

"Let us sustain the momentum of cleaning up Manila Bay. The DILG is committed to doing our role in the interagency Manila Bay Task Force which includes supervision of LGUs whether they are judiciously inspecting all establishments in their respective areas," Malaya said.

Around 5,000 volunteers joined the Manila Bay cleanup on January 27, removing tons of trash on the sea of the popular Manila site.



Polluter-firms face loss of permit

THE Interior department on Tuesday ordered the chief executives of the 178 cities and municipalities inside the Manila Bay Watershed Area to revoke the business permits of the establishments violating environmental laws.

In a statement, Interior spokesman Jonathan Malaya said Interior Secretary Eduardo Año had issued a memo ordering all

mayors of local government units in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Calabarzon to ensure that all establishments in their areas comply with the pertinent provisions of the National Building Code, the Fire Code, the Code on Sanitation and other related laws, regulations and policies.

In other developments:

- The Environment department will spearhead the simultaneous at the end of the month the cleanup of the waterways flowing into Manila Bay.

During a dialogue between the department and Metro Manila's village captains

with jurisdiction over the waterways, on Monday, Interior Climate Change Service Officer-in-Charge, Elenida Basug said the cleanup was set on March 31.

"The cleanup on Sunday [March 31] will highlight the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay," Basug said.

- The Supreme Court has been asked to reverse its ruling last month upholding the legality of the six-month closure of Boracay Island last year.

In a 36-page motion, three residents in the world-renowned tourist destination appealed to the high court to overturn its

earlier decision and instead nullify President Rodrigo Duterte's Proclamation 475, which closed Boracay to tourists and non-residents for rehabilitation from April 26 to Oct. 25 last year.

The Interior department said all LGUs should act swiftly on the enforcement of orders from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Laguna Lake Development Authority and other government agencies in line with the continuous effort to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve the Manila Bay watershed area.

PNA with Rey E. Requejo



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Pasaway sa Manila Bay, babawian ng business permit

Inatasan ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) ang 178 local government units (LGUs) na sumasakop sa Manila Bay Watershed area na bawiin ang business permits ng mga kumpanyang lumalabag sa environmental laws.

Ipinaliwanag ni DILG Undersecretary at spokesman Jonathan Malaya na ang malawakang pang-aabuso sa Manila Bay area ay kailangan ng lubusang kooperasyon ng mga kinaaukulang ahensiya ng pamahalaan, LGUs at publiko para ito ay lubusang maibalik sa dati.

Magugunita na naglabas si DILG Secretary Eduardo Año ng memorandum na nag-uutos

sa lahat ng alkaldeng LGUs sa National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon, at Calabarzon na tiyakin na ang lahat ng establisimyento sa kanilang mga nasasakupan ay sumusunod sa mga probisyon ng National Building Code, Fire Code, Code on Sanitation, at iba pang mga kaugnay na batas, regulasyon, at mga polisiya.

Kaugnay sa direktibang ito, sinabi ni Malaya na ang lahat ng LGUs ay dapat na ipatupad ang mga kautusan mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), at iba pang ahensiya ng pamahalaan para

sa patuloy na pagsisikap na malinis, ma-rehabilitate at mapreserba ang Manila Bay watershed area.

"The DENR and LLDA has started the inspection of commercial establishments last January 27, 2019, to ensure their compliance with environmental laws. They have issued Cease and Desist Orders and Notices of Violations to various establishments. All concerned LGUs should immediately act on the findings of the DENR and LLDA and revoke or suspend the business permits they have issued, as maybe applicable," ani Malaya.

Chito A. Chavez



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Negosyanteng nambababoy sa Manila Bay babawian ng permit

Inatasan kahapon ni Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año ang mga alkalde ng 178 siyudad at bayan na nakakasakop sa Manila Bay Watershed Area na bawian ng business permit ang mga negosyanteng nagmamay-ari ng mga establisimiyento na lumalabag sa environmental laws.

Ayon kay DILG Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya, nag-isyu si Año ng memorandum na inatasan ang lahat ng mga alkalde sa National Capital Region, Central Luzon at Calabarzon na tiyaking nakakasunod ang lahat ng mga establisimiyento sa kanilang mga nasasakupan sa National Building Code gaya ng Fire Code, Sanitation Code at iba pang ipinapatupad na batas, regulasyon at polisiya.

Binigyang-diin ni Malaya na ang business o mayor's permit ay isang pribilehiyo na ipinagkaloob sa knaila ng estado at maaaring bawiin ito kapag sumusuway sa mga regulasyon ang mga negosyanteng nagmamay-ari ng mga establisimiyento sa nasasakupan ng isang local government unit.

Upang masiguro ang implementasyon ng mga batas pangkalikasan, inatasan ni Año ang mga DILG regional director ng NCR, Central Luzon at Calabarzon na i-report sa kanya sa pamamagitan ng Bureau of Local Government Supervision ang mga LGU at local chief executive na susuway sa direktiba. **(Dolly Cabreza)**



DILG nagbabala vs brgy. officials na di pinalilinis ang mga ilog, estero

BINALAAN ng Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ang mga barangay official na hindi nakikiisa sa paglilinis ng mga ilog, estero, at kanal na nasasakupan nila.

Alinsunod umano ito sa Republic Act 9003 o Solid Ecological Waste Management Act.

“Umpisahan niyo ang paghuli sa mga nagtatapon ng basura sa kanal, estero, ilog dahil kung iyan ay pababayaan natin, mga kapitán, kung hindi niyo i-implement, walang mangyayari dito sa cleanup,” ani Interior and Local Govern-

ment Undersecretary Martin Diño.

Binitawan ang babala sa pulong kasama ang mga opisyal ng DILG, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), at Laguna Lake Development Authority.

Sa Marso 31 itinakda ng DENR ang malawakan at sabayang paglilinis ng mga waterway ng lahat ng barangay na dinadaan ng mga ilog ng Tullahan, Marikina, at Pasig.

Samantala, muli namang nagbabala si Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ukol sa pagligo sa bahagi ng Manila Bay sa may

Baseco Compound, Tondo, na hindi pa rin umano ligtas.

Sa kabila ng pagbabawal, marami pa rin kasi ang nahuhuling nagtatampisaw sa tinaguriang “Baseco beach.”

“Di pa kasi completely na malinis ‘yong quality ng tubig,” ani Cimatu. (Mula sa ABS-CBN News)



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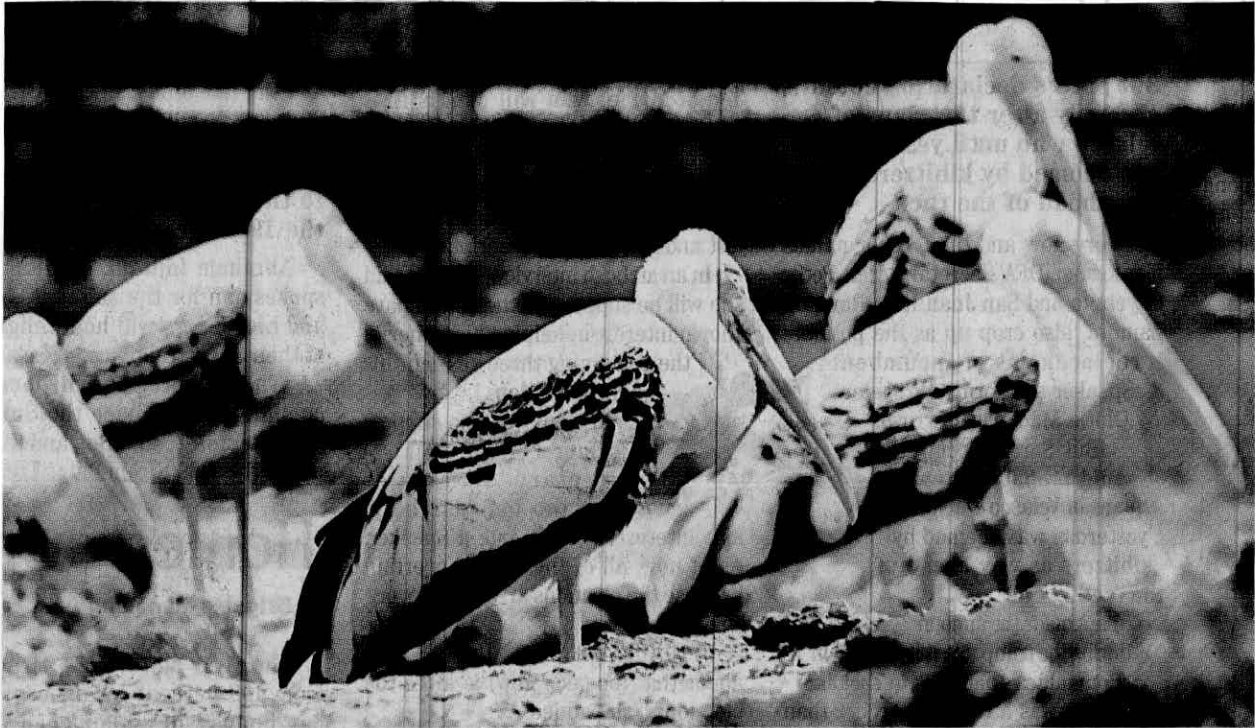


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Peace and quiet A muster of storks rests at the Manila Zoo months after its closure to treat sewage it courses through Manila Bay. AFP



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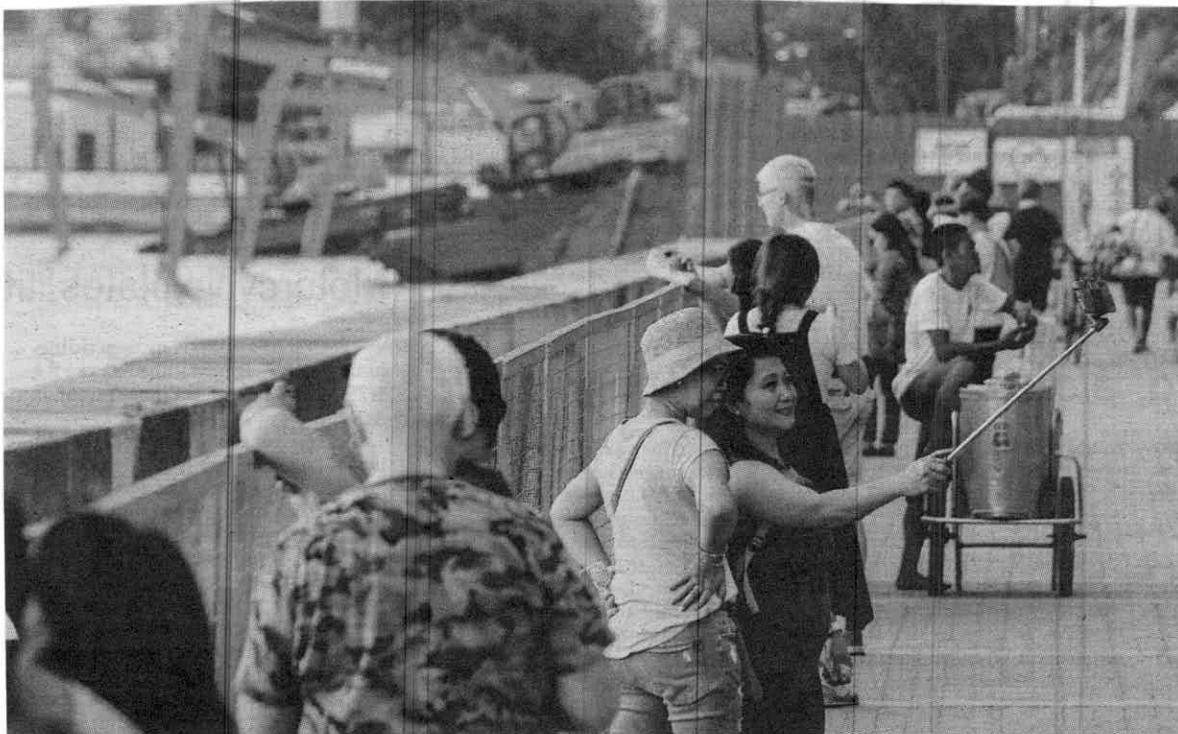
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ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA



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'DI PINAGSASAWAAN Sa kabila ng rehabilitasyon, dagsa pa rin ang mga tao—at maging vendors—sa paligid ng nababakuran nang Manila Bay, sa Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. **ALVIN KASIBAN**



DENR told to act as 'promoter' of mining industry

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was told to promote the highly scrutinize mining industry instead of just regulating it.

At the first Nickel Initiative conference, House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-

Arroyo urged the DENR to streamline its administrative processes to fast-track the issuance of permits and settle disputes in the mining sector.

"The DENR should not just act as a regulator. It must also act as a promoter," Arroyo said.

"Speaking for congress, we should not have adversarial stance. We should help

the sector grow," she added, noting that the sector will help the economy grow as well as create jobs.

Held for the first time and is considered as the flagship project of Philippine Nickel Industry Association (PNIA), the organization of some of the country's largest nickel mining companies, the Nickel Initiative conference seeks to explore

global trends and opportunities in the nickel consuming sectors and looks for possible collaborative areas for development in the future.

Right now, the local nickel industry is anticipating the growing nickel demand from the development of more electronic vehicles, stainless steel, transportation, infrastructure and

other energy sectors.

Fitch Solutions, part of international credit rating agency Fitch Ratings, earlier said Indonesia has already surpassed the Philippines as the largest global producer for nickel in 2018 and "will remain so in the years to come" as stringent environmental regulations and policy uncertainty continues to

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DENR told...

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limit the output here.

The latest Fitch Solutions outlook also showed that despite subdued performance in major markets including Canada, Australia and Russia, global nickel production will continue to hold strong this year driven by the ongoing supply recovery in Indonesia and a return to positive production growth in the Philippines.

In the Philippines alone, it expects nickel to pull off an average 1.7 percent year-on-year growth over 2019 to 2028.

"We believe Philippine nickel mining production to begin rising in 2019 following years of decline, as we expect currently suspended mining operations in the country to obtain a license to resume operations over the coming months," Fitch Solutions said.

From 2016 to 2018, production in the Philippines declined by an average of 22.7 percent as a result of the suspension of open pit mining on environmental grounds.

The production disruptions began in

June 2016 when former Environmental Secretary Regina Lopez carried out a series of environmental audits that led to the closure of many of the country's 41 nickel mines.

The outlook of Fitch Solutions contradicts the forecast earlier made by Philippine Nickel Industry Association (PNIA) President Dante Bravo, who said the country's nickel ore shipment may go down by 10 to 20 percent this year from the 30 million wet metric tons (WMT) projected nickel output for 2018.

According to him, production will be dragged by the new policy restricting miners to conduct massive digging and mining within their mine sites, among others.

It was in August when Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu signed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Department Administrative Order (DAO) on progressive rehabilitation, which aims to minimize the disturbed area of a mining project at any given time.

Under the DAO, if a miner is producing 1 million MT or less, they can only extract within 50 hectares of their mine sites, while those producing around 1 million to 3 million MT are only allowed to operate within 60 hectares of their tenements.

Those producing 3 million to 5 million MT, on the other hand, can only excavate within 70 hectares of their contract areas, while those with annual production of 7 million MT but less than 9 Million can only extract within 90 hectares of their mine sites.

There isn't any part in the Fitch Solutions report that mentioned the DAO and its possible impact in nickel production.

Meanwhile, Fitch Solutions said domestic miners, including SR Metals, Global Ferronickel, Nickel Asia Corporation and CTP Corp, will account for the vast majority of nickel production in the country.

Nickel Asia, in particular, will still be the driver of nickel production in the Philippines, especially as its Taganito and Cagdianoa mines, the first and second largest in the country respectively, have not been hit by the recent closures and suspensions.



'To boost manufacturing, govt should fast-track new exploration permits'

HOUSE Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday called on the environment department to expedite the processing of new exploration permits in aid of the government's program to revitalize manufacturing.

In a speech at the Nickel Initiative 2019, Arroyo urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to hasten the approval of mining exploration permits. She said this must be done over the next three years to make concrete results come out within President Duterte's term.

"First, the DENR should focus on process, [and] by process I mean to process and move the existing approvals and applications that are already in the pipeline, so that we can have actual results within the remaining three years of the Duterte administration," Arroyo said.

The DENR used to enforce a moratorium on the acceptance and processing of applications for exploration permits as ordered by then-Environment Secretary Re-

610

The pending applications for exploration permits as of January, with fewer than five having been approved

gina Paz L. Lopez. This was lifted through Administrative Order 2018-03 issued in July of last year by Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

There are 610 pending applications for exploration permits as of January, and fewer than five has been approved.

The DENR was also prodded by Arroyo to encourage mining proponents to implement their projects the quickest possible time to generate economic benefits the soonest. Further, the House Speaker recommended the DENR to look from within and assess its administrative procedures.

SEE "MANUFACTURING," A2

"As a promoter of business activity, Congress has urged [the] DENR to expedite the approval and processing of applications—large and small—that comply with regulations and policies," Arroyo said.

"Congress has noted that it is important to review not just the policies, but more so the administrative procedures because it is the procedures that could slow down the output of the industry, not just the policies. I am gratified to hear from some in the industry that the DENR appears to be moving in this direction," she added.

With clearer policies on mining, Arroyo argued the industry will play a significant role in government efforts to strengthen the manufacturing sector.

On the other hand, industry players were reminded by the House Speaker to adhere to

policies and regulations in place. She told them to support their host local government, as well as the communities in the mining areas, as "this will bolster your case in the eyes of the national level decision makers in government."

She added that mining firms must implement projects that include processing facilities—if not today, but at least in the near future—in line with President Duterte's desire to develop raw materials into finished products locally.

Last, Arroyo appealed to miners to rehabilitate the mined portions of their sites, "small area by small area, and not just at the end when everything has been mined out." She said this is in compliance with the President's policy thrust for the conservation of the environment. *Elijah Felice E. Rosales*



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Ngayong taon

NICKEL OUTPUT BABABA PA

INAASAHANG lalo pang bababa ang nickel production sa bansa ngayong taon sa gitna ng direktiba ng pamahalaan na naglilimita sa mga lugar na pagmiminahan.

Ayon kay Philippine Nickel Industry Association (PNIA) president Dante Bravo, bababa pa ang produksiyon ngayong taon dahil ang mga minero ay may limitadong lugar para sa kanilang operasyon.

"For this year, it should be around [lower by] 10-20 percent," wika ni Bravo sa sidelines ng Nickel Initiative conference kahapon sa Taguig City.



Aniya, ang nickel industry ay nakapagprodus ng 30 million wet metric tons noong 2018.

Noong nakaraang taon ay nagpalabas ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ng kau-

tusan na naglilimita sa mineral production areas depende sa production volume ng minahan.

Ang administrative order ay naglilimita sa mga lugar na pagmiminahan ng nickel miners sa 50 ektarya lamang

kapag ang kanilang production volume ay umabot sa one million metric tons.

"Miners can mine up to 100 hectares if their output is more than nine million metric tons," nakasaad pa sa kautusan.



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Land bureau squatter no more

New office in QC ensures orderly transactions concerning alienable lands

Nearly 10 months since its former headquarters in Manila was destroyed in a fire, the Land Management Bureau (LMB) has opened its new office at Estuar Building along Quezon Avenue in Quezon City.

"We are now ready to process land applications, survey and dispose alienable and

disposable lands in our new home," LMB Director Emelyne Talabis said.

The new LMB office houses the Director and Assistant Director and all Bureau Divisions, including Records and Knowledge Management, Geodetic Surveys, Legal, Land Policy and Planning and Land Management.

The Center for Land Administration and Management or CLAMP, as well as the Bureau's Bids and Awards Committee and Administrative Support Staff, also holds office in the building.

A staff bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the LMB recommends policies and programs for

the efficient and effective administration, surveys, management and disposition of alienable and disposable lands of the public domain.

It also oversees lands outside the responsibilities of other government agencies such as reclaimed areas and other areas needed for or are not being utilized for the purposes of which they have been established.

Talabis, meanwhile, thanked the DENR Bureau Directors who allowed LMB people to temporarily stay in their offices, such as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the Biodiversity Management Bureau and the Environmental Management Bureau.

Miguel Paolo Togonon



DENR-LMB NAGBUKAS NG BAGONG TANGGAPAN SA QUEZON AVENUE, QUEZON CITY

NAKAPAGBUKAS na ng bagong tanggapan ang Land Management Bureau (LMB) sa Quezon City matapos tupukin ng apoy ang dati nitong opisina sa Manila, halos sampung buwan na ang nakalilipas.

Ayon kay LMB Director Emelyne Talabis, handanghanda na ang kanilang ahen-siya na muling makapagsilbi sa publiko tungkol sa usapin na may kaugnayan sa lupa sa kanilang bagong tanggapan sa Estuar Building na matatagpuan sa kahabaan ng Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

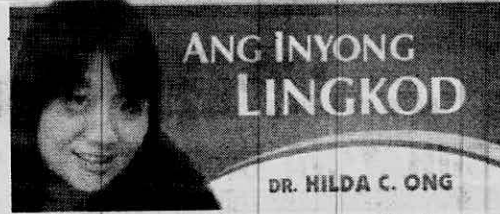
"We are now ready to process land applications, survey and dispose alienable and disposable lands in our new home," sabi pa ni Talabis.

Matatagpuan din sa

bagong gusaling LMB ang mga opisina ng director, assistant director, bureau divisions, kabilang na rito ang records and management, geodetic surveys, legal, land policy and planning at land management.

Magsisilbi ring opisina ng Center for Land Administration and Management (CLAMP), bids and awards committee at administrative support staff ang bagong gusali.

Samantala, nagpasalamat naman si Talabis sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) bureau directors dahil sa pagpayag ng mga ito na pansamantalang magkaroon ng opisina ang LMB sa kanilang tanggapan, kabilang sa mga ito ang Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Biodiversity Manage-



ment Bureau at ang Environmental Management Bureau.

"We are grateful that they took us in right after the fire," sabi pa ni Talabis at idinagdag pa nito na ang kanilang mga kliyente na nagkaroon ng transaksyon sa mga nabanggit na tanggapan ay maaari nang dumiretso sa Estuar Building. Noong Mayo 28, 2018 nang tupukin ng apoy ang LMB Building na matatagpuan sa Binondo, Manila.

Nadamay rin sa sunog ang mga katabi nitong gusali at establisimyo kabilang na rito ang National Archives Office.

Matapos ang sunog, tinanyak ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu sa publiko na ang lahat ng land data at records

para sa "land titling" ay buo at kumpleto.

Aniya, ang lahat ng records ng LMB office ay mayroong "digitized copies" sa DENR regional offices at sa provincial at community environment and natural resources offices.

Sinimulan na rin ng DENR ang malawakang implementasyon ng Land Administration Management System na isang paraan upang pag-samahin ang lahat ng land data at records sa bansa kabilang na rito ang pagpoproseso sa "land titling".

Maaaring matawagan ang LMB office sa numerong 372-38-28 o kaya naman ay bisitahin ang kanilang website: lmb.gov.ph o sa kanilang email: denrmb@yahoo.com.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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EDITORIAL

CARTOON

20 MAR 2019

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BAGONG TANGGAPAN NG LMB, BINUKSAN SA QC

PORMAL nang binuksan ang bagong tanggapan ng Land Management Bureau (LMB) sa Quezon City matapos tupukin ng apoy ang dati nitong opisina sa Maynila, halos sampung buwan na ang nakalilipas.

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ng Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

"We are now ready to process land applications, survey and dispose alienable and disposable lands in our new home," pahayag ni Talabis.

Matatagpuan din sa bagong gusali ng LMB ang mga opisina ng direktor, assistant director, bureau divisions, kabilang na dito ang records and management, geodetic surveys, legal, land policy and planning at land management.

Magsisilbi ring opi-

sina ng Center for Land Administration and Management-Philippines (CLAMP), bids and awards committee at administrative support staff ang bagong gusali.

Samantala, nagpapasalamat naman si Talabis sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) bureau directors dahil sa pagpayag ng mga ito na pansamantalang magkaroon ng opisina ang LMB sa kanilang tanggapan, kabilang sa mga ito ang Mines and Geosciences Bureau,

Biodiversity Management Bureau at ang Environmental Management Bureau.

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**BENEDICT
ABAYGAR, JR.**



'Boracay closure ruling sets a bad precedent'

BY JOEL R. SAN JUAN
@jrspanjuan1573

THE Supreme Court has been asked to reconsider its decision upholding the legality of President Duterte's Proclamation No. 475, which placed the island of Boracay under a state of calamity and ordered its temporary closure to pave the way for its rehabilitation.

The motion was filed by Boracay residents Mark Anthony Zabal, Thiting Estoso Jacosalem and Odeon Bandiola through the assistance of the National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL)

The petitioners are asking the Court to take a second look at the way Duterte exercised his police power, which they insisted failed to comply with Section 6, Article III, of the 1987 Constitution. That provision states that the right to travel can only be curtailed "in the interest of national security, public safety or public health, as may be provided by law."

They stressed that if the decision is not reversed, this would set "a dangerous legal precedent as far as constitutional rights are concerned." In its ruling issued in February, the Court held that Proclamation No. 475 did not pose an actual impairment of the right to travel.

The SC pointed out that the impact of the said proclamation on the right to travel was temporary and merely incidental to the intended rehabilitation of the island.

"It should also be pointed out that the temporary nature of the infringement does not change the fact that the damage had been done, with the livelihood of thousands of workers—petitioners included—being affected or lost, all to the detriment of these workers and their families," the petitioners explained.

Even though the travel restrictions were temporary or merely incidental to Boracay's rehabilitation, the petitioners insisted that such measure should comply with Section 6, Article III of the Constitution.

The petitioners said the SC ruling would give the government the reason to "evade accountability by restricting the rights of citizens as long as the end goal is something

other than the impairment per se."

Furthermore, the petitioners argued that contrary to the SC ruling, the closure of Boracay is not a valid exercise of police power.

They claimed that the exercise of police power is primarily a legislative prerogative subject only to "well-defined" exceptions.

"Clearly, without a law providing for a delegation of legislative power in relation to a given subject matter, any order issued by the President, or any other officer of the executive department under the guise of an exercise of police power is perforce null and void. It amounts to a usurpation of legislative authority insofar as it deals with matters that are properly subject of legislation," they added.



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Boracay shutdown legality questioned

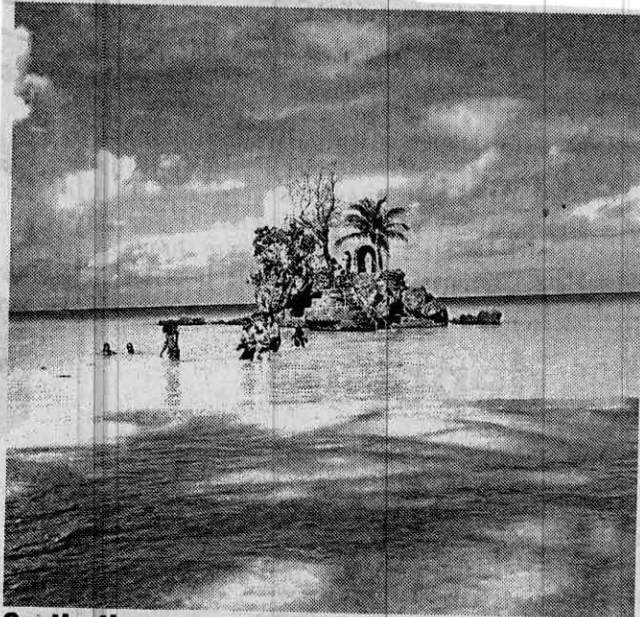
By Alvin Murcia

Three Boracay residents yesterday asked the Supreme Court (SC) to reconsider its decision upholding the legality of President Duterte's Proclamation 475, that placed the island under a state of calamity and ordered its temporary closure to pave the way for its rehabilitation.

Petitioners Mark Anthony Zabal, Thiting Estoso Jacosalem and Odeon Bandiola asked the SC to take a second look by which Duterte exercised his police powers.

They insisted Duterte's decision failed to comply with the requisites under Section 6, Article III of the 1987 Constitution.

They specifically pointed out that the right to travel can only be curtailed in the interest of national security, public safety and public health, as may be provided by law.



Captivating Boracay remains one of the most beautiful islands in the world.



Astoria undertakes P50-M upgrade of Boracay hotel

Hotel chain Astoria Hotels & Resorts (AHR) has spent an additional P50 million for improvements in the Astoria Boracay resort.

In a statement, AHR said the additional amount poured in for the resort located in Station 1 in Boracay Island, brings the total investment for the facility to P500 million.

The additional investment is being spent to provide Astoria Boracay's guests a more spacious main lobby.

In addition, the resort's 71 guest rooms will get new interiors, while the lap pool is being extended to 27 meters from 22 meters.

The resort's White Café has also been expanded to accommodate a pastry corner and a bakeshop, and a new all-day dining restaurant called Soggiato would be added to the offerings of the resort.

AHR is likewise spending for the construction of a sewage treatment plant to comply with the guidelines of the Department of Tourism and Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the island.

While the renovation is still ongoing, Astoria Boracay already had its soft opening

last January and the resort has received warm reception from tourists.

The resort bagged the 12th spot in the TripAdvisor 2019 Traveler's Choice Awards for Top Hotels in the Philippines, while its sister resort, Astoria Current in Station 3, placed first.

"We are extremely proud of the high level of service that Astoria Boracay and Astoria Current have both extended to our guests, as attested by the two properties' high TripAdvisor rankings. This will only push us even harder to work towards making every guest's stay in Boracay Island quite memorable," said AHR President Jeffrey Ng.

Last January, AHR completed the expansion of Astoria Current which currently has the most number of rooms along Station 3 for tourists.

To better serve its clients, AHR intends to continuously invest in improvements of its facilities.

Apart from Astoria Boracay and Astoria Current, AHR has other properties such as Astoria Plaza in Pasig City, Astoria Bohol, Astoria Palawan, and Astoria Greenbelt.

- Louella Desiderio



WESTERN VISAYAS: BORACAY, MALAY
**Boracay workers appeal SC decision
on constitutionality of Boracay closure**

WORKERS IN Boracay and a tourist have asked the Supreme Court (SC) to reconsider its decision upholding the constitutionality of the six-month closure of Boracay Island in 2018. In an appeal filed March 13, the petitioners, represented by the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers, asserted that the order is unconstitutional and there was an "actual and deliberate impairment of the right to travel" when the island was temporarily closed, which is a violation of the Constitution. The petitioners asked the SC in April 2018 to issue a temporary restraining order against the closure, but the high court dismissed it only last Feb. 12 on the grounds that there was no impairment of the right to travel as it was "merely incidental" and the proclamation was a valid police power measure. President Rodrigo R. Duterte ordered the closure of Boracay, which he described as a "cesspool," for rehabilitation from April 26 to Oct. 25, 2018. — **Vann Marlo M. Villegas**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

THROWAWAY LIFESTYLE

WHALE DEATH SHOWS DANGER POSED BY PLASTIC AT SEA, SAYS GROUP

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

The discovery of a dead whale, with 40 kilograms of plastic trash in its stomach, in Compostela Valley should serve as an urgent call for corporations to curb its plastic production and for people to be mindful of their throwaway lifestyle, environmental group Greenpeace said on Tuesday.

Photos uploaded by the D'Bone Collector Museum, a natural history museum in Davao City, on its Facebook page showed its founder, Darrell Blatchley, pulling out sheets of bloodied plastic and other garbage from the carcass of a juvenile male Cuvier's beaked whale.

The museum said it received news early on Saturday from the regional Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources office

that the whale was on the shores of Sitio Asinan in Barangay Cadunan. The marine mammal died at 11 a.m. that day.

In a post that accompanied the photos of the necropsy, Blatchley said the garbage from the dead whale included 16 rice sacks, four "banana plantation style bags" and multiple shopping bags.

"This whale had the most plastic we have ever seen in a whale," the post read. "It's disgusting."

Alarming

Abigail Aguilar, campaigner for Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines, said the frequency of marine animals dying due to plastic ingestion was alarming.

"In Davao Gulf alone, three whales and a dolphin have been found dead with plastic in their stomach for this year and we are just about to close the first quarter

of 2019," she said in a statement.

Aguilar said that in less than a year, whales, dolphins and turtles had perished, not only in the Philippines, but also in Thailand and Indonesia, showing a clear proof on how plastic pollution

gravely affected ocean animals.

Just last week, Greenpeace had documented the extent of plastic pollution in Verde Island Passage, a 1.14-million hectare strait within the Mindoro-Calavite-Tablas triangle declared by scientists as the

"center of the center of marine shore fish biodiversity."

Photos from Greenpeace showed sachets of condiments settling on coral beds and a tiny crab trapped inside a discarded plastic cup.

"We can never emphasize enough how urgent it is for corporations to reduce the production of single-use plastic and redesign packaging and systems," Aguilar said, noting that citizens should not only be mindful of their trash, but also put pressure on both government and the industry to take steps against the plastic crisis.

Ocean pollution

Plastic pollution remained among the country's top environmental issues, with the Philippines being ranked as one of the world's top ocean polluters.

A 2015 report by internation-

al group Ocean Conservancy said the Philippines, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam contribute over half of all the plastics that end up in the seas.

In Zamboanga del Norte province, a fisherman found a dead dolphin on the shores of Barangay Delusom in Leon B. Postigo town on Monday night.

Police said George Escobido was about to go fishing at 6:30 p.m. when he saw the dolphin, which was already decomposing.

Ricardo Mahinay of the municipal fisheries office said they decided to burn the dolphin, "because it is emitting [a] foul smell ... there's no more flesh in the stomach area, we can see the ribs."

This was the third time since 2012 that a dead dolphin was found on the shores of Leon B. Postigo, officials said. —WITH A REPORT FROM MART SAMBALUD INQ



DEADLY MEAL A deadly meal of plastic has weakened and eventually killed a Cuvier's beaked whale in Compostela Valley province last week. Darrell Blatchley, director of D'Bone Collector Museum, shows plastic waste lodged in the dead whale's stomach.



Villar cites firms helping address Phl's plastic waste woes

By **PAOLO ROMERO**

Sen. Cynthia Villar has cited a group of manufacturers for taking concrete steps to help solve the country's plastic waste problem.

Villar, chair of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources, praised the private companies in witnessing the signing of the memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS) and the Parañaque City government for the installation of a plastic waste recycling facility and research and development center in Barangay La Huerta.

Signing the MOA last week were PARMS president Crispian Lao and Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez.

PARMS is a multi-sectoral coalition composed of top corporations in the fast-moving consumer goods sector, including Coca-Cola FEMSA Philippines, Kopiko, Monde Nissin, Mondelez International, Nestle, Oishi, Pepsi Cola Products Philippines, Procter and Gamble, Unilever and Universal Robina.

"You are all on the right track in integrating sustainability in your business strategies. I think that makes good business sense and our future generations will thank you for that," Villar said.

She added that in the light of a study indicating that the Philippines is the third largest producer of plastic waste in the ocean next to China and Indonesia, drastic steps should be taken to reduce plastic waste.

The reelectionist senator is pushing for the implementation of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) concept now being practiced in European countries to reduce waste.

EPR is an environmental protection strategy requiring manufacturers using plastic materials in their packaging to be responsible for recovering the plastic waste.

It may take the form of reuse, buy-back or recycling program. The practice shifts the responsibility for waste management from government to the manufacturers.

Villar said she would also work for the amendment of the 19-year-old Solid Waste Management Act to make it more responsive to the changing times.

The establishment of the plastic waste recycling facility by PARMS was inspired by the efforts of Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance (Villar SIPAG) to recycle residual plastics into school chairs.

The facility is set to be operational within the first quarter of 2020.

The plastic factory built by Villar in Las Pinas produces armchairs made with "soft plastics." These are made to look like wooden chairs with changeable parts and have a life span of 20 years.

One school chair needs 20 kilos of soft plastics such as food wrappers to produce. These school chairs are donated to public schools all over the country.

Villar SIPAG plastics factories have also been built in Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro.

The senator said her family would be donating a similar recycling factory in Marawi, to help in the city's rehabilitation.

"I'm happy that many are participating in recycling. Of course, we cannot do this alone. Everybody should participate. Every town that will participate is a significant help," she said.

The MOA signing held at the Eden Room of Mondelez Philippines Inc. in Parañaque was also witnessed by Rep. Gus Tambunting, Mondelez plant head Atul Kulkarni, PARMS vice president Bert Guevarra and Parañaque City Environment and Natural Resources Office head Bernie Amurao.

A ceremonial turnover of Green Antz Eco-brick installations to the seven pilot beneficiary schools was also held with the principals and representatives of Colonel E. de Leon Elementary School, Don Galo Elementary School, Parañaque Central Elementary School, Paranaque Central Unit II, San Dionisio Elementary School and Sto. Niño Elementary School.



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Villar Cites Frooms helping address phil's plastic waste woes

Meanwhile, environmental group Greenpeace yesterday expressed alarm on the frequency of marine animals dying due to plastic ingestion.

"In less than a year, whales, dolphins and turtles have died in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, a clear proof of how grave plastic pollution affects our environment, most specifically ocean creatures," Greenpeace said.

"In Davao Gulf alone, three whales and a dolphin have been found dead with plastic in their stomach for this year, and we are just about to close the first quarter of 2019," it added.

The group issued the statement after a young whale washed ashore on the beaches of Compostela Valley in Mindanao on Friday. An examination of the carcass of the whale revealed that the causes of death are "starvation and dehydration" after it was found that it ingested 40 kilograms of plastic, and was tagged as one of the worst cases of poisoning ever seen.

- With Rhodina Villanueva



BULGAR

BOSES ng PINOY, MATA ng BAYAN



20 MAR 2019

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PINATUYONG ENDANGERED SPECIES, NASAMSAM

NAHAHARAP sa kasong paglabag sa Fisheries Code at Philippine Wildlife Act, ang isang Chinese national matakpos makumpiska ng mga ahente ng National Bureau of Investigation-Environmental Crime Division at tawhan ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ang daan-daang pinatuyong seahorses at bird's nest sa isinagawang entrapment operation kamakalawa ng hapon sa Binondo, Manila.

Kinilala ang may-ari ng drug store na si Ki Yung Wong na sinalakay ng mga ahente ng NBI at BFAR sa Salazar St., Binondo.

Nasamsam ng NBI ang mga pinatuyong seahorse na ibinebenta

ng P60,000 kada kilo habang ang mga dinurog na seahorse ay ini-export sa ibang bahagi ng Asia na pinaniniwalaang sex enhancer at nakapagpapabata.

Ayon kay Ohjee Cabilogan, technical staff ng BFAR, paubos na ang populasyon ng mga seahorse at darating ang panahon ay mawawala na ang produksiyon nito.

Ang seahorse ay ipinanggagamot umano sa asthma at ubo.

Habang ang bird's nest na nakuha sa Chinese drug store ay ibinebenta ng P17,000-P45,000 kada container kung saan ang mga ito ay ikinokonsiderang "protected species".

Ayon kay Dr. Steven Toleda ng DENR Bio-

diversity Management Bureau, ito ay inihalos sa soup at ang pagkuha nito ay kailangang may permit mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Naaresto rin ng NBI ang negosyanteng si Elizabeth Rivera, mayari ng fruit at plant stand sa Binondo dahil sa pagbebenta ng golden chicken fern na galing sa Cordillera Region at ikinokonsidera rin itong endangered at ipinagbabawal ang pagbebenta nito at ginagamit na ointment para sa sugat.

Umapela naman si Atty. Eric Nuqui, chief ng NBI-Environmental Crimes Division sa publiko na huwag tangkilikin ang endangered species.

(Mylene Alfonso)



Rody summons MWSS execs

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte and water regulators were set to meet last night to discuss the water crisis that Malacañang has blamed on mismanagement.

Duterte and officials of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) were scheduled to meet at 6:30 p.m., according to presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo.

"Perhaps the MWSS will explain," Panelo said. "Perhaps they will report latest developments. Perhaps they will report to (the President) on how they complied with his directive."

Duterte had ordered the MWSS to compel water utilities and offices involved in water management to deliver enough water to affected households and to release water from Angat Dam to address supply issues.

Lawmakers have initiated an investigation into the water supply shortage.

At the Senate inquiry yesterday, senators as well as affected residents said Manila Water Company Inc. should be held accountable for the water shortage that hit areas handled by the private east zone concessionaire.

The MWSS said it is mulling penalties against Manila Water for the unexpected water shortage under its concession in many parts of Metro Manila and Rizal province.

It was a reversal of the MWSS' statement the other day that Manila Water could not be sanctioned for the water

shortage.

MWSS Regulatory Office chief Patrick Ty told the committee on public services, chaired by Sen. Grace Poe, that the agency can invoke Article 10, Section 10.4 of the government's concession agreement with Manila Water that provides penalties for failure to fulfill obligations – providing water – for 15 days.

"There's no prohibition from doing it (imposing penalties) now. We're studying it right now, we're exploring our options for June or July," Ty told the Senate hearing.

He explained the 15-day period stated in the section where a private concessionaire's failure to fulfill its obligations that it was already affecting public health and welfare has yet to lapse as MWSS formally wrote them on the matter last March 8, which is the start of the countdown.

All indications, however, point to water interruptions continuing beyond 15 days after Manila Water president Ferdinand de la Cruz admitted to the committee the full service may be restored only by June based on the company's plan.

Ty explained the normal course of action is to impose penalties during the time when the MWSS and the private water concessionaires conduct rate rebasing, which is done every five years.

The next such review for new water rates is on 2022. He said the penalties are usually in the form of the MWSS disallowing certain expenses that concessionaires want to charge to their customers.

"We want to focus on fixing things first...normally we would wait, but this (water shortage) is unprecedented," Ty said.

Negros Occidental Rep. Albee Benitez, chairman of the committee on housing and urban development in

the House of Representatives, said the millions of customers deprived of water for days in Metro Manila can file a class suit against Manila Water.

"Manila Water admitted violations, so there is negligence on their part and proper compensation to their customers should follow," Benitez said, referring to the previous hearing of the House on the issue.

"Every time these consumers fail to settle their monthly bills, their water supply is cut automatically," Benitez lamented. "There should be proper compensation for their customers. Because if nothing, we (lawmakers) will be obliged to encourage a class action suit."

Mandaluyong Rep. Alexandria Gonzales, whose congressional district bore the brunt of the water shortage, said the service provider "should seriously consider offering a rebate or a discount at the very least in the water bills of residents for the month of March."

"I think that this is a fair enough compensation for Manila Water's customers for their inefficiency that has caused a lot of unnecessary suffering and discomfort in the lives of the people in Mandaluyong," she said.

Marikina City Rep. Bayani Fernando supported Benitez's call.

"Manila Water should not be given new franchises anymore until they have done their work. I think they have put too much focus on their profits, more than their mandate. Let's set aside too much greed," he said.

Bayan Muna party-list group said the MWSS should compel Manila Water and Maynilad to reduce their "non-revenue water," a euphemism for water lost through pilferage and distribution leakages.

"What is glossed over by the regulator is that billions of gal-

Rody Summons MWSS execs P-2

lions of water is wasted daily from leakages in the existing distribution infrastructure of Maynilad and Manila Water," the group said.

Quezon City Rep. Winston Castelo also said Manila Water should slash the next billing amount for customers hit by the shortage, which affected roughly 1.2 million households.

MWSS administrator Reynaldo Velasco echoed the same sentiment but maintained that the decision is up to Manila Water.

Manila Water, on the other hand, said it has yet to decide on the matter, including the call for refund for its consumers.

"All decisions would come from MWSS-Regulatory Office," Manila Water communications manager Dittie Galang said.

Restoration

After continuous interruptions, Manila Water has restored supply in about 93 percent of its concession area for almost two weeks.

Manila Water said its customers now have longer hours of water availability daily as compared to last week.

After implementing the rotational water supply scheme that began on March 14, latest data showed that 93 percent of Metro Manila's east zone now regularly receives water supply.

Most of Manila Water's customers are now receiving better service, particularly in barangays San Isidro, San Jose, San Luis and San Roque in Antipolo who are now getting an additional seven hours of water supply daily.

Barangays Bambang and Wawa in Taguig are also getting more hours of supply.

However, portions of Barangay Pasong Tamo in Quezon City, Barangay Pulo in Mandaluyong, Gitnang Bayan in San Mateo and Bagong Ilog in Pasig are still experiencing unstable water supply.

The same goes for Upper



Manila Water president Ferdinand dela Cruz and MWSS administrator Reynaldo Velasco face the Senate hearing on water shortage affecting parts of Metro Manila and nearby provinces yesterday.

GEREMY PINTOLO

Forbes in Makati, San Martin de Porres in Parañaque and Raha Sumakwil in Taguig.

"There are still some technical solutions that are being put in place," Galang said.

Meanwhile, tankering services continue to be deployed to the remaining seven out of the 11 barangays where water supply through the network has yet to be restored.

The rotational service scheme adopted is a temporary measure that aims to balance water supply distribution.

In the past days, Manila Water has been making calibrations in its network distribution that has resulted in the continuous improvement of water restoration.

Find more sources

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said the water crisis would have been "much less of a threat" if the Kaliwa

Dam were built during previous administrations. The dam will be funded through official development assistance from China and will be built by China Energy Engineering Corp.

But environment groups and local officials are opposed to the construction of the dam, saying it would cause floods, displace residents and destroy Sierra Madre's biodiversity.

Panelo said the administration could stop the Kaliwa Dam project if it is fraught with anomalies.

"It will push through until perhaps anomalies are discovered," he said.

"Of course, the President can stop anything, unless there is a contract already. There might be impairment of obligations in the contract. But it can be (stopped) if there was fraud in entering it," he added.

Panelo, also the President's

chief legal counsel, said the project would be implemented "unless it's stopped by the President." He said it would be up to Duterte to decide whether to reevaluate the deal with China.

"We will leave it to his judgment personally. But if you ask me personally, if the advantage is so clear, if it is true that the Chinese proposal is onerous, I think we should look into it," Panelo added.

Panelo said he would ask the National Economic and Development Authority why it preferred the Chinese deal over the proposal by Japanese firm Global Utility Development Corp. The Japanese firm has expressed readiness to build the Kaliwa Dam under a 25-year build-operate-transfer scheme. Its proposal costs about \$410 million.

Sen. Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito urged the government to find more water sources to prevent water crisis.

Ejercito pointed out that Metro Manila has only two sources of water - Angat and La Mesa Dams - which were built in 1960s. The population of the metropolis has since increased threefold.

Ejercito said Manila Water should have forewarned the public about the water crisis to allow them to prepare and make the necessary preparation to minimize their inconvenience. - **With Paolo Romero, Delon Porcalla, Louise Maureen Simeon, Jess Diaz, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Rhodina Villanueva**



20 MAR 2019

DATE

NEARER RECORD LOW SET IN 1998

NO RELIEF IN SIGHT: LA MESA WATER LEVEL KEEPS DROPPING

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

With thousands of consumers in Metro Manila still suffering from water shortages, La Mesa Dam offered no relief as its water level dropped further on Tuesday.

As of 6 a.m., the dam's water level was listed at 68.63 meters, or below the 69-meter critical low level, according to the

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Barely a week ago, it was 68.74 meters, breaking a 21-year record low of 68.75 meters during an El Niño phenomenon in 1998.

Not all due to El Niño

Normal water level at La Mesa, an earth dam from where Manila Water Inc. draws water, is 80.15 meters.

Pagasa hydrologist Danny Flores said in an interview that the water level was expected to recede further with the lack of significant rainfall in the dam's watershed in Novaliches, Quezon City.

Continuous drawing of water from the dam to meet growing demand from consumers would further bring the water level down, Flores said.

Despite the dry weather, he

said the situation could not be fully attributed to El Niño, a dry spell triggered by periodic warming in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Since last year, La Mesa dam's water elevation has been significantly low, Flores said.

Impact mainly on Mindanao

"During the El Niño in 2010, for instance, the water level in the dam was not that low," he

said. "The impact of El Niño can be observed more in areas in Mindanao, which are affected by drought."

With less rain and the approach of summer, Flores said water levels in all dams in the country were expected to go down.

Areas serviced by Ayala-owned Manila Water, which supplies water to the east zone, have experienced water short-

ages since last week.

Households, businesses and even hospitals were affected by the low water pressure and service interruptions.

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate held separate inquiries into the issue, which brought to the fore the lack of planning and infrastructure needed to supply the demand of Metro Manila's growing population. INQ


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Palace studying Kaliwa Dam project, Japanese firm's proposal

By **GENALYN D. KABILING**

The proposed China-funded Kaliwa Dam project and the alternative proposal of a Japanese firm will be placed under government study, Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said Tuesday.

Panelo, also Chief Presidential Legal Counsel, said his office would undertake the study on the water source

proposals and get inputs from experts after the Japanese company claimed it could build a better alternative to the China-funded dam project.

"We will leave it to his judgment call but if you ask me personally if the advantage is so clear, if it is true the Chinese proposal is onerous, I think we should look into it," Panelo said during a Palace press briefing when asked if the President ► **10**

Palace studying Kaliwa... ◀ 1

will order a review of the China contract amid the Japan's supposed better and cheaper proposal.

"I think that should be thoroughly studied if the claim of the Japanese is true or not," he added.

He clarified though the China-funded Kaliwa Dam project will probably continue despite the pending inquiry to be conducted by his office. "Tuloy siguro 'yun until siguro kapag may na-discover ako na anomalous [That will continue unless I discover something anomalous]," he said in a later interview with reporters.

He added that the dam project could be stopped "if there is fraud entering into it."

Panelo said he would also ask the Japanese company to give him a copy of the proposed Kaliwa Intake Weir project with the government. "My office will look into it and then I will make a recommendation to the President," he said.

He said he would also ask the ex-

pert opinion of National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) why it prefers the Chinese over the Japanese proposal.

Osaka-based Global Utility Development Corporation had earlier revived its offer to build the Kaliwa Intake Weir project. The proposal includes the construction of a seven-meter high and 16-kilometer weir or low dam that can provide 550 million liters per day of water.

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Reynaldo Velasco, however, maintained that the Kaliwa Dam project was done deal after being approved by NEDA.

The government had earlier signed a loan agreement with China on the construction of the Kaliwa Dam in Quezon, another potential source of water for Metro Manila.

The local community, however, has reportedly opposed the construction of the dam amid concerns floods and displace the residents.



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Weirs, instead of dams, for our water problem

THE need for more dams, catchment basins, and other means to store water for use in our fast-growing cities has once again drawn national attention in the wake of the water shortage that hit Metro Manila's east zone last week, prompting the House of Representatives to hold hearings on the problem.

Among the proposed water projects was the Kaliwa Dam at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountains, but opposition to the project has come from various quarters, and for many reasons. It would inundate the ancestral domain of the Dumagat Remontados who had lived in the Sierra Madre for centuries. The proposed dam was to be built over the Infanta Fault; should an earthquake damage the dam, a huge flood would sweep downstream along the Kaliwa River where some 100,000 people live.

The tribe and the river residents have found an ally in the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) which said that the World Commission on Dams itself has noted that while dams have made important contributions to human development, "in too many cases, an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been made to secure those benefits, especially in social and environmental terms, by people displaced, by communities downstream, by taxpayers, and by the natural environment."

When Pantabangan Dam was built by President Ferdinand Marcos, an entire town had to be flooded after its population was relocated. To this day, it is said, when waters ebb in the dam, the tower of the submerged town church would stick out of the water, undoubtedly a painful sight to those who used to worship in the church.

In the wake of the opposition to Kaliwa Dam,

an alternative project was proposed in 2009 by a Japanese company which presented an unsolicited proposal for a Kaliwa Intake Weir. A weir is a small barrier across a river, that alters the river's flow and raises its level, but not to the extent that a big dam would.

The Global Utilities Development Co. (GUDC) of Osaka, Japan, presented the plan to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) in 2009, when the two signed a memorandum of understanding. The GUDC resubmitted the proposal in 2017. The weir would be only seven meters high, with a 16-kilometer-long tunnel and a water treatment plant,

In the wake of rising opposition to dams in general because these tend to inundate established communities and pose danger to people downstream in case of damage to the dam from earthquakes or other natural causes, the idea of weirs instead of dams merits closer study and consideration by the government.

The Kaliwa dam has been held in abeyance for 30 years now. It still has no Environment Compliance Certificate as required by RA 7586. And the indigenous people have also not given their Free Prior and Informed Consent as required by RA 8371.

Metro Manila needs new sources of water to meet its ever rising demand which is now being met, rather inadequately by Angat Dam. The Kaliwa Dam has not been able to move forward all these many years because of fierce opposition from mountain communities which will lose their ancient tribal lands and from downstream communities who fear a catastrophe in case of damage to the dam. A weir, or a much smaller river barrier, as proposed by a Japanese company might be the answer to these concerns.



EDITORIAL

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EDITORIAL

Weirs, sa halip na dam para sa ating problema sa tubig

MULING nakapukaw ng atensiyon sa bansa ang pangangailangan para sa mas maraming dam, catchment basin, at iba pang paraan upang makapag-imbak ng tubig na magagamit sa pangangailangan ng mabilis na lumalagong mga lungsod, nang marakaranas ng problema sa kakulangan sa tubig ang silangang bahagi ng Metro Manila nitong nakaraang linggo, na humantong sa pagdaraos ng mga pagdinig sa Kamara de Representantes hinggil sa problema.

Kabilang sa mga mungkahing proyekto ang Kaliwa Dam sa paanan ng bulubundukin ng Sierra Madre, ngunit tinututulan ito ng iba't ibang sektor dahil sa maraming dahilan. Palulubugin nito ang minanang lupain ng mga Dumagat Remontados na ilang siglo nang naninirahan sa Sierra Madre. Ang mungkahing dam ay itatayo sa ibabaw ng Infanta Fault; at kung masira ang dam dulot ng isang lindol, malaking baha ang aagos pababa sa ilog ng Kaliwa kung saan naninirahan sa paligid nito ang nasa 100,000 residente.

Nakahanap ng kakampi ang mga tribo at mga residente sa paligid ng ilog sa Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) na sinabing mismong ang World Commission on Dams ang nagpaalala na bagamat mahalagang ambag ang mga dam sa pag-unlad, "in too many cases, an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been made to secure those benefits, especially in social and environmental terms, by people displaced, by communities downstream, by taxpayers, and by the natural environment."

Nang ipatayo ang Pantabangan Dam ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos, isang buong bayan ang nalubog sa baha matapos ilipat ng lugar ang mga residente nito. Hanggang sa kasalukuyan, sinasabing kapag bumababa ang tubig sa dam, lumilitaw sa tubig ang tore ng simbahan sa bayan na nalubog, isang masakit sa paningin para sa mga dating nagsisimba doon.

Sa gitna ng mga oposisyon sa Kaliwa Dam, isang alternatibong proyekto ang inihain noong 2009 ng isang Japanese company na nagbibigay ng mungkahi para sa isang Kaliwa Intake Weir. Ang weir ay isang mababang harang patawid sa ilog, na nagpapabago sa agos ng tubig at nagpapataas sa lebel nito, ngunit hindi katulad ng nagagawa ng malalaking dam.

Ipinresenta ng Global Utilities Development Co. (GUDC) ng Osaka, Japan ang plano sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) noong 2009, nang lumagda ang dalawa sa isang memorandum of understanding. Muling isinumite ng GUDC ang mungkahi noong 2017. May taas lamang na pitong metro ang weir, na may 16 kilometrong haba na tunnel at isang water treatment plant.

Sa gitna ng lumalagong oposisyon sa pagtatayo ng mga dam sa pangkalahatan dahil na rin palulubugin nito ang mga komunidad at nagbabanta ng panganib sa mga taong naninirahan sa baba nito kung sakaling masira ang dam dulot ng lindol o ng iba pang sakuna, ang ideya ng weir sa halip na dam ay nararapat na bigyan ng mas malalim na pag-aaral at konsiderasyon ng pamahalaan.

Ang pagtatayo ng Kaliwa Dam ay 30 taon nang naaantala. Nananatili itong walang Environment Compliance Certificate na itinatakda ng RA 7586. Hindi rin ibinibigay ng mga katutubo ang kanilang Free Prior and Informed Consent na isang kahingian ng RA 8371.

Kailangan ng Metro Manila ng bagong mapagkukunan ng tubig upang mapunan ang pangangailangan nito sa tumataas na demand na ngayoy natutugunan, hindi man sapat ng Angat Dam. Hindi makausad ang proyekto ng Kaliwa Dam sa nakalipas na mga taon dahil sa matinding pagtutol ng mga komunidad sa bulubundukin na mawawalan ng minanang mga lupain ng kanilang tribo at mula sa mga komunidad pababa ng ilog na nangangamba sa malaking sakuna na maaari nitong idulot kung sakaling masira ang dam. Ang weir, na higit na maliit at mas mababang harang sa ilog, na iminungkahi ng isang Japanese company ay maaaring sagot sa mga suliraning ito.



CTALK

CITO BELTRAN

Challenge: Redeem old glory!

After accepting and successfully overcoming "The Boracay Challenge" and going further by launching their "Battle for Manila Bay," here is a challenge for the dynamic duo of President Rodrigo Duterte and DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu: Redeem the glory of Laguna De Bay into a sustainable freshwater resource and world class recreation and tourism destination. Laguna De Bay is the largest and nearest water source that is within the boundary of Metro Manila and is well worth the effort and logistics to clean it up.



For starters, why rely on remotely located, high investment dams to store and supply water for Metro Manila when God already gave us this huge lake right in our backyard. According to Congressman Bayani "BF" Fernando who is an engineer and former secretary of the DPWH, the lake is so huge that it will only lower by 30cm or a foot deep to supply Metro Manila's current deficit. Congressman Ruffy Biazon on the other hand sees Laguna De Bay as a high potential tourism and recreation destination that can generate more employment and income compared to the few jobs and measly income generated from fish pens that pollute and obstruct the waterways of Laguna De Bay.

It is high time for the President and Secretary Cimatu to call in the officers of the Laguna Lake Development Authority and require an accounting or presentation of what real development they have managed to achieve in the lake, aside from monitoring and collecting fees from fish cage owners and shoreline eateries. Yes we need aquaculture to supply food but they should not be the only group making a profit at the lake's expense. They should also call to task all the local government officials who have in one way or another allowed or led the illegal acquisition of land or construction of buildings along the lake, not to mention illegal pipes draining waste material into the lake. Don't just save the lake, develop it like they did with Lake Caliraya!

Given our recent drought with Manila Water, the most sensible thing to do is to build as many dams and reservoirs as possible and make sure that we collect as much rain and runoff water as we can. But because we are in the Philippines, focus tends to be on the political or the controversial. After Manila Water managed to restore some order and predictability with their water distribution, the focus has started to shift on what is beginning to be "the controversial Kaliwa Dam project." Controversial because on the surface there is the suggestion that the project is an example of "China" getting preferential treatment and "someone entering on behalf of the Government, into a contract or transaction manifestly and grossly disadvantageous to the Philippines." That last part is lifted from the Anti Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, Paragraph 3, section G.

GUDC or Global Utility Development Corp., an Osaka-based firm, was the first to make the unsolicited proposal to build the Kaliwa Dam project, a seven-meter high dam on Kaliwa River in Tanay, Rizal for \$410 million. But that proposal was sidelined by the government in preference to a bid by the Chinese government to build a 73-meter high dam at a cost of \$800 million. If you stick strictly to powerpoint presentations it would seem that a \$400 million price difference is grossly overpriced. However there is a huge difference between a seven-meter high dam versus a 73-meter high dam. What's weird is that the seven meter high dam has an estimated capacity of 550 million liters while the China dam that will cost twice the price is only larger by 50 million liters in capacity or 600 Mld. That's still a lot of water but at twice the price it does not make sense.

Another slight difference is the claim that the Japanese proposal will be fully funded by Japanese Official Development Assistance while the Chinese are only willing to cover 80 percent via ODA with the project costing twice as much. In terms of safety and environment, a 73-meter high dam generally scares environmentalists and safety engineers in terms of natural disasters that can occur through a major earthquake.

Just as "controversial" is the fact that foreign entities will be building and running vital utilities especially at a time when China has a foothold on our power grids nationwide and will soon be a major player as the 3rd telecommunications provider.

It is worrisome to think that while the current administration is pushing things through their motto "Build, Build, Build!" there is the distinct possibility that the next or some future administration will be chanting "Sue, Sue and Send them to jail!"

The current MWSS Administrator Reynaldo Velasco tried to explain away the Kaliwa dam issue by saying: "This has been bid. It cannot be further delayed. The government has committed and signed. This is a done deal." Our recent legal history however teaches us that every time there is a change of government, the previous officers from undersecretary and below spend an average of three years in court, while Cabinet secretaries burn six years to clear their name or stay out of jail.

While we are honor-bound to respect contractual obligations, officials in the Duterte administration and members of Congress and the Senate are all duty-bound to carefully review whether or not the deal with the Chinese builders are advantageous and beneficial to the government of the Philippines and the safety of local residents. Only time will tell if the emerging Kaliwa dam controversy will transform into graft charges and court cases, but from the looks of it, the GUDC officials are not simply walking away or staying quiet, as a result the media has picked up the story. This will be another election issue and ultimately a legal liability for all the government officials directly or indirectly involved.

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COMMONSENSE

MARICHU A. VILLANUEVA

Too shy to follow the resign offer of Manila Water CEO

The hot summer is a yearly seasonal change in our country, usually starting in March and extending until May. The rainy months begin in June. With the advent of climate change, the summer season became a prolonged dry spell brought about by the so-called "El Niño" phenomenon. Its opposite, called as "La Niña" phenomenon, sets in for the rest of the year.



The two weather phenomena are predictable occurrences in our country. They are so predictable that there are templates of specific measures to address potential problem areas.

Thus, it was with great disbelief when the "El Niño" became the scapegoat of the supposed drying up of water sources of the Manila Water Co., one of the two concessionaires of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS). A retired police general, Reynaldo Velasco – who now heads the nine-man MWSS board – conceded that water security in Metro Manila indeed faces threats related to the effects of climate change. The MWSS chief noted the prolonged summer heat gave rise to such water shortage fears.

While the "El Niño" period has already started manifesting per monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), its impact would not be as immediate as to dry up the major water sources in Angat and La Mesa dams that supply the East Zone concession areas in Metro Manila.

The Ayala-owned Manila Water covers the north-eastern part of Metro Manila and Rizal while Maynilad Water Services Inc., the other concessionaire of the MWSS, run by the Manny V. Pangilinan (MVP) Group of Companies, serves the western/southern part of Metro Manila and Cavite.

Both MWSS concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad Water Corp. draw their water supply from La Mesa and Angat Dams for their consumers in Metro Manila. But Maynilad does not experience the same problem that Manila Water is having, a problem that forced the latter to resort to severe water service interruptions the past two weeks now.

As it turned out, the water shortage in the east zone of Metro Manila is not because of climate change.

Sadly, it was due to some other reasons that could have been avoided, if not mitigated.

After initially pointing to the "El Niño" effects, the ensuing water supply shortage of customers of the Manila Water, the truth finally came out coming from the mouths of the culprits themselves, the MWSS and the Manila Water.

As it turned out, the water shortage in the east zone of Metro Manila is not because of climate change.

MWSS chief regulator Patrick Ty first admitted in public it was their fault – the government – for the much delayed implementation of water dam infrastructure projects to answer for the projected growth of demand and supply of such basic commodity as potable drinking water.

In particular, Ty pointed to the P13.43-billion New Centennial Water Source – Kaliwa water dam project. It is one of the flagship projects of the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte to be funded through official development assistance from China. The project came about from a bilateral agreement President Duterte signed with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October 2016 during his state visit to Beijing.

The Chinese government committed P10.2 billion in official development assistance (ODA) to fund the Kaliwa dam project. The balance of the total project cost will be shouldered by the MWSS out of its own resources coming from fees collected from their concessionaires – the Manila Water and the Maynilad.

Once completed and become operational by 2023, the Kaliwa Dam will provide an additional 650 million liters of water a day (mld) to augment the 4,000 mld from Angat Dam in Bulacan. Aside from Kaliwa Dam, the MWSS is also overseeing the construction of tunnels that will serve as conveyance of water coming from Laiban Dam, Wawa Dam, and the Kanan Hydroelectric Dam which is slated to be completed in 2026.

At the ensuing public hearing conducted at the House committee on Metro Manila development held last Monday, Marikina Rep. Bayani Fernando declared: "The problem is not climate change because the water is there." From the explanation and admission of officials concerned, Fernando noted, the supply interruption resulted when the water cannot go to Cardona dam of the Manila Water. "The institutional failure of the MWSS is the construction of the tunnels to bring water to La Mesa dam," Fernando pointed out.

Himself a mechanical engineer by profession, the Marikina Congressman suggested to the Manila Water Co. to control the distribution by installing water pressure regulators while the utility is still trying to stabilize water supply in their system.

At the same House hearing, Manila Water Co. president and chief executive officer (CEO) Ferdinand dela Cruz officially apologized and held himself personally accountable for the failure of his company to anticipate the unexpected contingency. To his credit, Dela Cruz told the congressional public hearing that he was taking responsibility: "...for the sudden drop in our service level to your constituents who we have served for 21 years."

Supply from La Mesa Dam is Manila Water's reserves since it has maximized allocation from Angat Dam at 1,600 mld. While the water level in La Mesa Dam dropped to critical levels due to El Niño, stocking for water added pressure due to increased demand.

For having manned up for the lapses of his company, Dela Cruz received plaudits from Congress leaders. "I admire you for your humility. But that is your biggest mistake. You admitted it. Now, you have to pay for it," Fernando told Dela Cruz at the close of the House hearing. Fernando dissuaded though Dela Cruz who announced also his resignation, if need be. "You should not resign because you are now the best in your trade given your experience now," he told the contrite Manila Water Co. CEO.

But that's how the private sector business operates where CEOs – following the command responsibility principle – are ready to offer their heads in the cutting board.

As of this writing, President Duterte summoned last night to a meeting at Malacañang top officials of the MWSS who are obviously too shy to follow the lead of the Manila Water CEO by way of courtesy resignation.



Water supply will worsen, unless... (2)

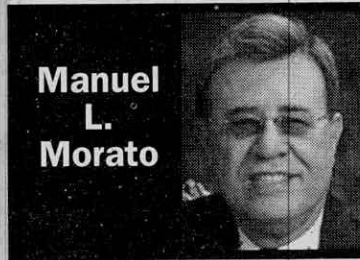
IN the excavation where my parents' ancestral home once stood, many are wondering why a pool of water remains despite the hot summer month, coupled by short supply of water all over the city. Many are wondering where the pool of water is coming from.

Before my father built the ancestral home which he gifted my mother in the 1950s, the house was not there before the outbreak of the war. Instead, it was a beautiful garden full of exotic trees and flowers, including a huge swimming pool. For sure, none of my younger siblings would remember, but I do. I am the eldest and some of my siblings were not even born yet or too young to know.

Sometime in 1940, my father had a deep well constructed in one part of the property. That fresh water well supplied the swimming pool with water; and later the ancestral house, as well as the houses of my siblings in the compound.

Nobody ever thought that World War II would trigger two years after the construction of the fresh water well - called "pozo." To make a long story short, that "well or pozo" supplied water to thousands of people in the neighborhood and farther areas with no supply of potable water. That well (pozo) saved so many lives during the war; and people lined up to get fresh

UNCENSORED



**Manuel
L.
Morato**

water from the well. That was during the war years and there must be few survivors still living today.

That explained the pool of water in the excavation site in the middle of summer that refuses to dry. As the earth sips the fresh water from the well, the main vein down deep under the ground still spreads water in the excavation site.

It is really a pity that the excavation hit and destroyed the "pozo" which springs fresh water into the excavation site. We used to connect with the well for potable water. It's a very deep well.

Sayang po talaga kasi 'yang pozo na ginawa ng aking ama, Tomas Morato, should also be part of the historical site for without that fresh water well, constructed in 1940, many people in the neighborhood and from far away places would have died during the war

years Manila was occupied by the Japanese. That's only part of the story to tell about our ancestral home which was built beside that historical fresh water well that kept so many of our people alive, including the family and other relatives.

The big swimming pool was converted into a fish-pen where "gurami" fish were bred in it also to give away to those who needed food. But before my father was brought to Fort Santiago and later released by the Emperor of Japan after 8 months of incarceration, my father buried about 89 personal handwritten letters of President Quezon to my father and other personal things of his, put in a drum and buried in that swimming pool which was fully covered by ground and landscaped into a beautiful garden with fruit-bearing trees such as santol, marang, langka, kamias...

With this excavation, I wonder who got my father's documents for I told the excavators to please watch out for that steel drum. No news who got it, including his firearms as colonel of the USAFFE, one of the reasons for his incarceration for the Japanese came to know that he was helping the guerillas during the outbreak of the war, supplying them with trucks of rice and other provisions in the mountains.

For comments and suggestions email at mlmorato@yahoo.com



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Dep't of Water isusulong

Naghain ng panukala si re-electionist Sen. Bam Aquino na layong magtatag ng Department of Water upang maiwasan na ang nangyaring water shortage na nagparusa sa libu-libong residente ng Metro Manila.

Sa kanyang Senate Bill 2216, ipinaliwanag ni Sen. Bam na nabigyang diin ang kahalagahan ng paglikha ng Department of Water, Irrigation, Sewage and Sanitation Resource Management dahil sa nangyaring water shortage sa ilang bahagi ng kamaynilaan.

Ang Department of Water ang tututok sa isyu ng tubig, irigasyon, sewage at tinatawag na sanitation resource management, kabilang ang karapatan sa tubig.

Sinabi ni Sen. Bam na palalakasin ng departamento ang pagpapalano sa mga pagkukunan ng tubig at titiyakin ang pantay at epektibong paggamit nito sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa, kasama pati irigasyon, paglikha ng enerhiya, pagsasaka, pangingsda, pati na paggamit nito sa negosyo at mga industriya.



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BRIEFS

GBP carbon sink project in Iloilo

Global Business Power Corp. (GBP) has partnered with the West Visayas State University (WVSU) for a reforestation and carbon sink project in a 150-hectare tract of land in the province of Iloilo.

Dubbed as the Handumanan Reforestation and Carbon Sink Project, the program aims to mitigate climate change and promote environmental awareness by planting trees that will serve as carbon sink. GBP, through subsidiaries Panay Energy Development Corporation (PEDC) and Panay Power Corp. (PPC), has adopted a property owned by WVSU-CAF in barangays Jayubo and Sagcup in the municipality of Lambunao.

"The 150-hectare carbon sink area inside the WVSU-CAF campus highlights the shared commitment of GBP and WVSU to help conserve the environment and combat climate change," GBP president Jaime Azurin said.

"This partnership between Global Business Power Corp. and WVSU is one big step towards ensuring the survival of our future generation. Our joint effort to plant trees and preserve our forestland is a legacy of love for humanity and Mother Earth," said WVSU president Dr. Luis Sorolla Jr. *Handumanan* is a Hiligaynon term that means "legacy."

The seven-year project will have the first four years devoted to planting and establishment of the reforestation areas, while the remaining three years will be for the maintenance of the planted trees.

Under the memorandum of agreement, a minimum of 67,000 seedlings must be planted per year. Prior to coordination and preliminary work on the reforestation project, GBP had been conducting planting activities in the area since 2015.

In support of the project's agro-forestry component, two types of trees will be planted – forest trees that are native to the area like narra and fruit-bearing trees like jackfruit. Tall forest trees provide canopy while shorter fruit-bearing trees provide livelihood.



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PRRD abolishes Road Board

A measure abolishing the corruption-tainted Road Board has finally been signed into law by President Duterte.

Republic Act No. 11239 transfers the rights, assets and liabilities of the abolished Road Board to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). The law also provides that motor vehicle user's charge (MVUC) collection will be remitted to the National Treasury. **▶10**

PRRD abolishes Road...

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The new law which was signed by the President last March 8 was released by the Palace Tuesday.

"The Road Board created by Republic Act No. 8794 is hereby abolished," the law read.

Duterte has backed the abolition of the Road Board to address corruption in the agency and streamline government services. The board was empowered to implement the management and use of the funds collected from motor vehicle owners.

Under RA 11239, the DPWH will absorb the employees of the abolished Road Board without diminution of their salaries and other benefits. Employees

separated from service as a result of the abolition will receive separation benefits.

"The DPWH shall, by virtue of this Act, be subrogated to all the right and assume all the obligations and liabilities of the Road Board," the law read.

"All records, property, assets, equipment and funds of the Road Board, including unexpended appropriations or allocations shall be transferred to the DPWH," it added.

On the disposition of the MVUC, all funds shall be remitted to the National Treasury under a special amount in the General Fund. It will

be earmarked solely for the construction, upgrading, repair and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, road drainage to be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

A congressional oversight committee will also be created to monitor the implementation of the law and the use of the special funds.

The Secretaries of the Department of Budget and Management, DPWH, and Department of Transportation have also been directed to promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the law and ensure the wise and efficient use of the special funds.

The law takes effect 15 days after publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper. (Genalyn D. Kabling)



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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t's now law: Road Board gone

By **Christine O. Avendaño**
@10avendanoINQ

The controversial Road Board is no more.

President Duterte has finally signed into law a measure abolishing the board which drew his ire at the height of reports about massive corruption involving road users' tax.

Malacañang released on Tuesday a copy of Republic Act No. 11239 or "An Act abolishing the Road Board and providing for the disposition of the motor

vehicle user's charge (MVUC) collections," which the President signed on March 8.

Under the three-page law, all funds to be collected from road users would be remitted to the National Treasury under a special account in the general fund to be earmarked solely for road construction, repair and rehabilitation, among others.

The law tasked the secretaries of the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and Department of Transporta-

tion with promulgating rules and regulations of the law.

DPWH role

The DPWH, the law provided, would assume all the responsibilities and liabilities of the Road Board.

All employees to be affected by the board's abolition would be absorbed as needed by the DPWH and those who would lose their jobs would receive separation benefits.

Mr. Duterte had pushed for the abolition of the Road Board,

saying that billions of pesos in revenue from road users' tax ended up in the pockets of corrupt officials.

The President took the side of the Senate in abolishing the Road Board after the chamber and the House of Representatives clashed over the board.

The Senate adopted the House bill abolishing the Road Board last year but the House had moved to rescind the bill upon assumption into office of Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as Speaker. INQ



Duterte abolishes Road Board

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte has signed into law Republic Act 11239 which abolishes the controversial Road Board and provides for the disposition of the Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC) collections.

The President signed the law last March 8. Duterte had called for the abolition of the Road Board last year due to allegations of corruption.

The Road Board oversees funds from the MVUCs, which are intended for road maintenance and improvement of road drainage, installation of traffic lights and road safety devices, and air pollution control, but the Commission on Audit had claimed that the funds were being misappropriated.

Under the new law, the collected MVUCs shall be remitted to the Bureau of Treasury and would be used for the constructions, upgrading, repair and rehabilitation of roads, bridges and road drainage which would be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The Departments of Budget and Management (DBM), Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Department of Transportation (DOTr) shall, within 30 days, come up with the implementing rules and regulations to ensure the implementation and carrying out of the abolition and ensure the "prudent, wise, effective and efficient utilization of the special funds."

The DPWH shall oversee

the absorption, separation and retirement of the affected personnel and ensure that those who would be separated or retired shall receive the benefits due them.

The DPWH shall also be subrogated to all the rights and assume all the obligations and liabilities of the Road Board, along with the records, property, assets, equipment, and funds including unexpended appropriations.

A congressional oversight committee composed of five senators, including one from the minority, and five House of Representative members, including one from the minority, to be appointed by the Senate President and Speaker, respectively, shall be created to monitor the continued imple-

mentation of the Republic Act 8794 and use of the special funds.

The President, on March 11, also signed into law Republic Act 11241 or the Philippine Occupational Therapy Law of 2018, which stemmed from Senate Bill 454 and was adopted by the House of Representatives as an amendment to House Bill 8528,

The measure aims to regulate the registration, licensure, and practice of occupational therapy in the Philippines through the creation of a three-man Professional Regulatory Board of Occupational Therapy – which will have three-year term – that will oversee a more effective supervision, control, and regulation of the practice of occupational therapy in the country.



Law abolishing Road Board signed, Palace says

PRESIDENT Rodrigo R. Duterte signed earlier this month a measure that abolishes the Road Board, Palace officials confirmed.

Malacañang released to reporters on Tuesday a copy of Republic Act No. 11239, "An act abolishing the Road Board and providing for the disposition of the motor vehicle user's charge collections..." which Mr. Duterte signed on March 8.

The new law requires "all monies collected under this Act (to be) remitted to the National Treasury

under a special account in the General Fund to be earmarked solely for the construction, upgrading, repair, and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and road drainage to be included in the Annual Appropriations Act."

The law repeals the act that created the Road Board, RA 8794.

The implementation of the law will be monitored by a Congressional Oversight Committee composed of five members of the House of Representatives and five members of the Senate who

will be appointed by the Speaker and the Senate President, respectively.

The secretaries of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the Department of Transportation (DoTr) are tasked, under the law, to jointly, within 30 days from its effectivity, "promulgate the rules and regulations to implement and carry out the intent, objectives, purposes, and provisions" of the law.

The law instructs the DPWH to absorb, "as needed," the employees of the secretariat of the abolished agency, "without diminution of their salaries and other benefits."

Employees who are separated from the service as a result of the abolition of the agency and its secretariat "shall receive separation benefits."

The law also gives the DPWH to take on "all the rights and assume all the obligations and liabilities of the Road Board, and

all its records, property, assets, equipment, and funds."

Unexpended appropriations or allocations shall also be transferred to the DPWH.

The new law takes effect 15 days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

The Senate passed Senate Bill 1620, which sought the abolition of the agency, in February. The House of Representatives approved the counterpart House Bill 7436 in May 2018.

The Senate adopted the House version on Sept. 12, but later on the same day, the House of Representatives rescinded the bill's approval.

The Road Board, under RA 8794, is tasked to manage the funds collected from the motor vehicle user's charge, which is used for road maintenance and drainage, installation of traffic lights and road safety devices, and for air pollution control. However, the agency has been beset by corruption allegations. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**



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Road Board abolished

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has signed into law a measure abolishing the allegedly graft-ridden Road Board.

Duterte signed Republic Act 11239 or "An Act Abolishing the Road Board and providing for the disposition of the Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC Collections" on March 8 but the the media learned of the signing only on Tuesday.

Duterte had sought the abolition of the Road Board due to persistent allegations of corruption.

The Road Board oversees funds from the MVUCs, which are supposed to be used exclusively for road maintenance and improvement of road drainage, installation of traffic lights and road safety devices, and air pollution control.

But the Commission on Audit has said the Road Board was vulnerable to corruption and the MVUCs were being misappropriated.

EMontano



Road Board nilusaw ni Duterte

TULUYAN nang binuwag ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang Road Board na kumukulekta ng buwis sa mga motor vehicle sa bansa.

Pinirmahan ng Pangulo ang Republic Act 11239 na nagbubuwal sa Road Board noong Marso 8, 2019.

Lahat ng pondong nakulekta ng Road Board ay ilalagak sa National Treasury

sa pamamagitan ng special account at magagamit lamang para sa construction, upgrading, repair at rehabilitasyon ng mga kalsada, tulay at road drainage na isasama sa pambansang budget.

Ang mga empleyadong maapektuhan sa pagbubuwag ng road board ay lilipat sa Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), partikular

ang mga kuwalipikado at kailangan ng departamento.

Ang mga hindi maa-absorb ay bibigyan ng separation pay batay sa itinatakda ng batas habang ang mga kawani ay papayagang makapagretiro at tatanggap ng kaukulang retirement benefits.

Batay sa report ng Commission on Audit (COA),

mula 2001 hanggang 2018 ay umabot sa P166 bilyon ang nakulektang road user's tax, at P138.87 bilyon ang sinasabing nagamit na.

Matatandaang tutol ang mga kongresista na buwagin ang road board subalit nanindigan si Pangulong Duterte na lusawin ang ahensiya dahil nagiging ugat niya ito ng katiwalian. **(Aileen Taliping)**



Digong nilusaw na ang Road Board

Tuluyang binuwag ni Pangulong Duterte ang Road Board matapos lagdaan nito ang bagong batas na Republic Act 11239 na lulusaw sa nasabing tanggapan na tinawag niyang corrupt na road board.

Noong 2017 ay hiniling ni Pangulong Duterte sa Kongreso na buwagin ang road board na siyang nangongolekta ng road users tax.

Nakapaloob din sa RA 11239 na, ang makokolektang road user's tax ay mapupunta muna sa National Treasury.

Wika ng Pangulo, ang bilyong pondo na nakolekta sa road user's tax ay napupunta lamang sa balsa ng mga corrupt officials kaya mas mabuting buwagin na lamang ito. Nasa P12 bilyon ang nakokolektang road user's tax kada taon.

Kinuwestyon din ng Commission on Audit (COA) ang nasa P90 bilyon mula sa P160 bilyon pondo nito noong nakaraang taon na pinaniniwalaang misappropriated.

Ang dapat paglaanan ng nakokolektang road user's tax ng road board ay para sa road maintenance at improvement ng road drainage, paglagay ng traffic lights, road safety devices at air pollution control. *(Rudy Andal)*



IMPACT OF GLOBAL CONSUMPTION, CLIMATE CHANGE

POOR FOLK'S RIGHT TO WATER CUT OFF BY THIRSTY EXPORTS, UNEQUAL SUPPLY

BARCELONA—Yogita has to fetch water up to six times a day—sometimes going out in the middle of the night—from a hand pump about half a kilometer from her house in India's Madhya Pradesh state, leaving her baby son with a neighbor.

In the summer, her husband cycles 3 kilometers to get the family's water, and shouts at the 25-year-old if she cannot prepare meals at the right time because she is out getting water.

"I haven't eaten anything all day as fetching water was the most important task at hand," Yogita said in a report from international charity WaterAid showing the impact of global consumption on water-short communities worldwide.

Exports of crops—like coffee, rice, avocados and cotton—are important sources of income for many countries.

But large amounts of water are used to produce them, even as poor communities struggle to get enough for their basic needs, a situation made worse by climate change, WaterAid said in the report published on Tuesday.

The world must ensure "the push for economic development through exports of food and clothing does not imperil current and future generations' access to water," said WaterAid UK chief executive Tim Wainwright ahead of World Water Day on March 22.

India, for example, is the world's third largest exporter of groundwater, accounting for 12 percent of the global total.

Rate of depletion

Meanwhile, the rate of depletion of its groundwater jumped by 23 percent between 2000 and 2010, and as many as 1 billion of its people live in wa-

ter-scarce areas, WaterAid said.

Under global development goals agreed in 2015, governments pledged to provide access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030.

But three in 10 people, or just over 2 billion, still do not have a "safely managed" service, meaning a water source on the premises—such as a piped supply or a well—free from fecal and chemical contamination.

In India, the government has done "reasonably well" in providing clean water close to people's homes, WaterAid India chief executive VK Madhavan told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Yet three-quarters of households still do not have water on tap, and there is a major problem with contamination by arsenic, nitrates, fluoride and salt, he added.

Priorities for the Indian gov-

ernment are to improve water quality and expand a pilot project to provide piped water in villages from 115 districts to the whole country, he said.

Poor pay more

The 2019 UN World Water Development Report, also launched on Tuesday, said that while safe, clean drinking water and sanitation are human rights, the world is not on track to provide those things to everyone by 2030.

People who are poor or marginalized due to gender, age, ethnicity or religious identity are also more likely to have limited access to proper water and sanitation, the report noted.

It explores how to help three groups in that category: families living in urban slums, small-holder farmers in rural areas,

and people uprooted by conflicts and disasters.

Rick Connor, editor in chief of the United Nations World Water Development Report, said that in cities, rich homes with piped water tended to pay far less per liter, while the poor in slums often had to buy water from trucks, kiosks and other vendors, shelling out 10 to 20 times more.

"The misperception is that they don't have water because they can't afford it—and that is completely wrong," with some spending up to 30 percent of their salaries on water, he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Financial pressure

Policies to ease that financial pressure include putting in stand-pipes shared by several households, and designing tar-

iffs and giving rebates to make water more affordable.

In rural areas, one key solution is rainwater harvesting and storage systems to tide communities over in a drought and provide water to irrigate crops, such as a UN-backed program called "1 million cisterns for the Sahel" in West Africa.

For refugees, aid agencies are increasingly trying to provide water supplies and sanitation in ways that also benefit local people and avoid tensions, Connor said.

In northern Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp, for example, the government and agencies rehabilitated wells, and fixed up water and wastewater systems for Syrian refugees and communities nearby, easing pressure on limited resources, the report said. —THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION



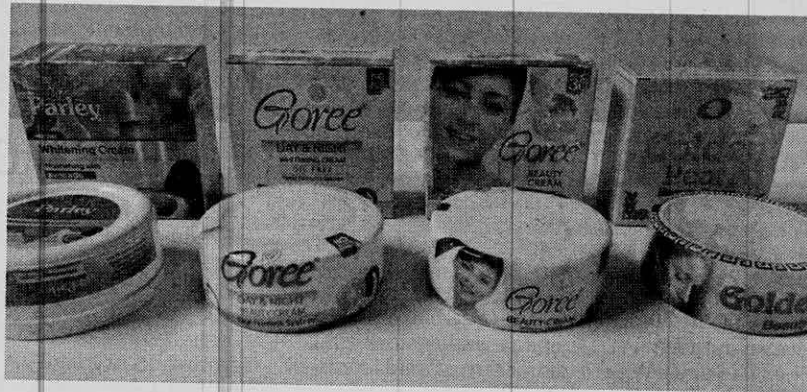
EcoWaste group laments rampant sale of mercury-laced beauty products

THERE must be sustained law enforcement efforts including on-the-spot confiscation of mercury-contaminated skin lightening products, and closure of erring business establishments.

This was the appeal of the environment-advocate group EcoWaste Coalition to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the midst of continuous sale of unregistered skin lightening products particularly those made in Pakistan.

Four of five Pakistan-made products — Parley Herbal Whitening Cream, Goree Beauty Cream, Goree Day & Night Whitening Cream, Golden Pearl Beauty Cream were already banned by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for containing dangerous levels of mercury are still openly sold over the counter at shopping mall stores in Pasay City.

Thony Dizon, chemical safety campaigner, said the Pakistan mercury-



laden facial creams are openly being sold at Baclaran Terminal Plaza Mall and Baclaran Bagong Milenyo Plaza for P225 to P300 each.

"We are dismayed by the nonstop and remorseless trade of unregistered skin lightening products from Pakistan containing extremely high levels of mercury way above the permissible limit of 1 part per million (ppm)," he said.

Using a handheld X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF)

analytical device, they found Parley Herbal Whitening Cream with 32,200 parts per million (ppm) of mercury; Goree Beauty Cream with 21,700 ppm; Goree Day & Night Whitening Cream with 17,800 ppm, and Golden Pearl Beauty Cream with 10,000 ppm of mercury.

"Mercury, a highly toxic substance, is not permitted for use as an ingredient in cosmetic products such as skin whitening creams, lo-

tions and soaps as per the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive. To protect human health and the environment, governments through the Minamata Convention on Mercury have targeted a global phase-out of skin whitening cosmetics with mercury above 1 ppm by 2020," he added.

The FDA issued an advisory last March 5 banning two variants of Parley for containing mercury above the 1 ppm limit. Similar advisories were

also issued against two types of Goree on October 30, 2017. Golden Pearl was among the mercury-tainted products banned by the FDA through an advisory released on September 8, 2014.

Adverse health effects brought about by highly toxic mercury in cosmetic products include kidney damage, skin rashes, skin discoloration and scarring. Chronic use reduces the skin's normal resistance to against bacterial and fungal infections. Other effects include anxiety, depression or psychosis and peripheral neuropathy.

Aside from Parley, which the FDA banned recently, the group on March 26, 2018 notified the FDA about the sale of other Pakistan-made skin whitening creams laden with mercury such as Aneeza Gold Beauty Cream, Aneeza Saffron Whitening Cream, and Face Lift Whitening Beauty Cream. **Cory Martinez**