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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Phl soon to be mercury free — DENR

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Filipinos can look forward to a mercury-free environment when the country ratifies the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

The DENR led the launch of the country's Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) report in Quezon City recently.

The report, which was prepared by the Environmental Management Bureau of the DENR, outlines the national requirements and needs for the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu expressed hope the release of the MIA report would "serve as a kickoff point for our campaign for a mercury-free lifestyle for a safer environment."

"Once it ratifies the convention, the Philippines will be protected from being a dumping ground for products containing mercury and will help avoid further risk to the country's aquatic life, where mercury levels have been increasing," Cimatu added.

The Minamata Convention is the world's first legally binding treaty to phase out mercury, a highly toxic substance that poses threats to the environment and human health.

In 2013, the Philippines was among the 128 countries that signed the convention, which regulates the use and trade of mercury. The convention is named after the Japanese city where industrial emissions of the toxic substance caused a poisoning disease affecting thousands of people in the 1950s.

The Philippines has yet to ratify the convention, which entered into force in August 2017.

The MIA was prescribed by the convention to establish a baseline report, which will help the country prepare to deal with mercury once the treaty is ratified by the Senate and its provisions are implemented.

According to the MIA report, the primary anthropogenic sources of mercury in the country or those that result from human activities is the extraction and use of energy sources. This is followed by the production of primary or virgin metal, which includes mining and gold processing, and the production of other minerals and materials with mercury impurities.

Mercury inventory is one of the important decision-making tools towards mitigating environmental impacts brought about by toxic pollutants such as mercury.

The report identified four areas in the country with confirmed mercury contamination. These are Palawan Quicksilver Mines, Mambulao River in Camarines Norte, Mabuhay Vinyl in Lanao del Norte and Lumanggang Creek in Compostela Valley.

It also identified suspected mercury contaminated sites in 11 regions in the country, including the Meycauayan River, Manila Bay, mining sites and gold processing sites in Camarines Norte and Masbate, landfills in Barangay Inayawan in Cebu City, Consolacion town in Cebu province, Naboc River in Davao and T'boli in South Cotabato.

Other sites include Agusan del Sur in Caraga region, the decommissioned Bulawan Mine of Philex Gold in Negros Occidental, the towns of Sipalay and Hinoban in Negros, Sitio Dalicno in Itogon, Benguet and the municipality of Licuan-Baay in Abra.

The MIA report stated the Philippines is 100 percent compliant with the convention's Article 16 on health aspects.

In 2008, the Department of Health issued Administrative Order No. 2008-021 mandating the gradual phase-out of mercury in all Philippine health care facilities and institutions.

To ensure the effective implementation of the Minamata Convention, the report recommended the creation of an inter-agency coordinating group composed of mercury focal points from different relevant government and private agencies to be chaired by the DENR.

The review of existing policies and regulations on mercury use and management was also recommended, as well as the creation of legislation to support the banning of mercury mines in the country in accordance with Article 3 of the Minamata Convention.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that mercury exposure can damage the nervous, digestive, respiratory, endocrine and immune systems.

It could also lead to impaired vision and hearing, cause paralysis, affect the development of the fetus and cause developmental delays in children, the WHO added.



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ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAMAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA

'Pinas maliligtas sa mercury sa Minamata Convention

Makaliligtas ang Pilipinas sa pagiging "dumping ground" ng mercury-containing products sa oras na ratipikahan ng bansa ang Minamata Convention – isang kasunduan na poprotekta sa kalusugan ng tao at sa kapaligiran laban sa mercury emissions.

"Once it ratifies the convention, the Philippines will be protected from being a dumping ground for products containing mercury and will help avoid further risk to the country's aquatic life, where mercury levels have been increasing," ayon kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Taong 2013, isa ang Pilipinas sa 128 bansa na lumagda sa convention, na nagbabawal sa paggamit at pakikipagkalakalan ng mercury.

Sa pamamagitan ng Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA), inilatag ng bansa ang

mga requirement para sa pagpapatupad ng Minamata Convention.

Base sa report ng MIA report, ang pangunahing anthropogenic sources ng mercury sa bansa ay ang paggamit ng energy sources.

Ito ay sinusundan ng produksiyon ng primary o virgin metal, na kinapapalooban ng pagmimina at gold processing, at produksiyon ng iba pang mineral na may mercury.

Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz



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MERCURY-FREE PH ISUSULONG NG DENR

MAKAAASA ang mga Filipino na malaki ang posibilidad na maging mercury-free ang Filipinas sakaling maratipikahan ang Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Ito ang naging mensahe ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu sa ginanap na Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) report sa Quezon City kamakailan na binasa ni Undersecretary Atty. Jo-nas Leones.

Ang naturang report na inihanda ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ng DENR ay nagbabalangkas sa mga pangangailangan para sa implementasyon ng Minamata Convention.

Umaasa si Cimatu na ang MIA report ang maging susi upang masimulan ng Filipinas ang pagiging "mercury-free lifestyle" para sa mas ligtas na kapaligiran.

"Once it ratifies the convention, the Philippines will be protected from being a dumping ground for products containing mercury and will help avoid further risk to the country's aquatic life, where mercury levels have been increasing," pahayag ni Cimatu.

Ang Minamata Convention ang kauna-unahang hakbang upang maihinto ang paggamit ng mercury na isang nakalalasang kemikal na posibleng maging banta sa pagkasira ng ating kapaligiran at makaapekto sa kalusugan ng mga tao.

Matatandaang noong 2013 ay isa ang Filipinas sa 128 na bansa na lumagda para sa "convention" na layuning magkaroon ng regulasyon sa paggamit at pag-angat ng mercury.

Kinuha ang pangalang Minamata sa isang lungsod sa Japan kung saan ay libong katao ang naapektuhan dahil sa paggamit ng nakalalasang kemikal noong 1950s.

Nabatid na base sa MIA report, ang pangunahing pinanggagalingan ng mercury sa bansa ay mula sa mga aktibidad ng mga tao partikular na ang labis na paggamit ng "energy sources" na sinundan ng produksiyon ng mga tinatawag na "virgin metal" kabilang na rito ang pagmimina ng ginto at ang pagkuha ng minerals na nagiging dahilan upang dumumi at masira ang kapaligiran.

Ang mercury inventory ay isa sa mga importanteng paraan upang mabawasan ang epekto ng mga toxic pollutant sa kapaligiran.

Lumalabas sa ulat na apat na lugar sa bansa ang kumpirmadong kontaminado ng mercury kabilang na rito ang Palawan Quicksilver Mines, Mambulao River sa Camarines Norte, Mabuhay Vinyl sa Lanao del Norte at Lumanggang Creek sa Compostela Valley.

Pinaghihinalaan din na posibleng kontaminado na ng mercury ang

labing-isang lugar sa bansa na kinabibilangan ng Meycauayan River, Manila Bay, minahan sa Camarines Norte at Masbate, landfills sa Barangay Inayawan sa Cebu City, Consolacion sa Cebu province, Naboc River sa Davao at T'boli sa South Cotabato.

Ang iba pang lugar na pinaghihinalaang kontaminado ng mercury ay ang Agusan del Sur sa Caraga region, Bulawan Mine ng Philex Gold sa Negros Occidental, munisipalidad ng Sipalay at Hinoban sa Negros, Sitio Dalicno sa Itogon, Benguet at ang munisipalidad ng Licuan-Baay sa Abra.

Nakasaad pa sa MIA report na ang Filipinas ay sumusunod sa Article 16 ng convention na tumutukoy sa kalusugan. Noong 2008 nang maglabas ng Administrative Order No. 2008-021 ang Department of Health (DOH) na nag-uutos na tanggalin ang mercury sa lahat ng health care facility at institutions sa bansa.

Upang matiyak ang implementasyon ng Minamata Convention, inirekomenda sa ulat ang pagbuo ng inter-agency coordinating group na binubuo ng "mercury focal points" mula sa iba't-ibang sangay ng gobyerno at private agencies na pamumunuan ng DENR.

Inirekomenda rin ang pag-aaral sa mga kasalukuyang polisiya at regulasyon sa paggamit

at pangangasiwa ng mercury bukod pa rito ang pagkakaroon ng batas na susuporta upang maipagbawal ang pagmimina ng mercury sa bansa base na rin sa pagsunod sa Article 3 ng Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Nagbabala na rin ang World Health Organization (WHO) na

maaaring makapinsala ang mercury sa ating nervous, digestive, respiratory, endocrine at immune systems kung saan maaapektuhan ang pandinig, paningin, magdulot ng pagka-paralyse, maaapektuhan ang ipinagbubuntis at paglaki ng mga bata. **BENEDICT ABAYGAR, JR.**



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World Water Day spotlights Boac River

This year's celebration is adopting the objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

By Gladys Mae Ablon

In line with the celebration of the World Water Day, the provincial environmental and natural resources office in Marinduque led in the clean-up of Boac River to highlight the importance of accessibility to clean water and sanitation as a basic human right.

Boac River was severely affected by the Marcopper mining disaster on 24 March 1996 after a tunnel of the firm collapsed, sending thousands of tons of mine tailings to several bodies of water in the province.

This year's celebration of World Water Day is adopting the objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ASD) which calls for concerted actions by all countries to end poverty and

tackle climate change while leaving no one behind.

A series of activities has been lined up nationwide from 15 to 31 March to raise awareness about the importance of water and sustainable development.

They will highlight the 6th of the 17 sustainable goals of the 2030 ASD to ensure availability and sustainable management of water for all by 2030.

During yesterday's clean-up, volunteers collected more than 650 kilos of garbage from the 27-kilometer river that spans 26 barangays.

This, as the environment agency also raised concerns for greater water security for the country's future needs and urged concerned offices to focus on accessibility to clean water and sanitation as a basic human right.



Dead and dry What was once a living and flowing Boac River is now just a shadow of its old self.



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Water security measure in the works

By Kristina Maralit

The government is in the midst of crafting short and long-term solutions to address the country's water supply needs, Malacañang said yesterday.

In a statement, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles bared that department secretaries, agency heads, and representatives convened earlier in the week for a high-level inter-agency meeting on water security at the Department of National Defense (DND).

Among the agencies represented at the meeting chaired by the DND were the National Economic and Development Authority, Departments of Agriculture, of Energy, of Environment and Natural Resources, of Health, of Public Works and Highways, of Science and Technology, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Local Water Utilities Administration, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

Representatives agreed to submit to President Rodrigo Duterte a draft executive order strengthening the NWRB and addressing the fragmentation of the water sector.

"Currently there are 30 or so agencies involved in water resources management. The agencies present at the meeting recognize that this institutional setup is problematic. For example, there are four agencies involved in resource assessment, four involved in policy, seven in water supply, four in sanitation, five in water quality management and six in watershed management," Nograles said.

He also lamented the non-existence of a single repository of water data and intermittent updating of water availability data.

Besides the draft Executive Order, Nograles said two other drafts were also endorsed for approval and submission to the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council.



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Tolentino: Water crisis to get worst

HUGPONG ng Pagbabago and PDP-Laban senatorial bet Francis Tolentino has underscored the need to prepare for the water crisis scenario.

Tolentino citing a study, warned the country's water crisis will be worst in 2025.

Tolentino stressed the need to establish a department that will manage the country's water resources and act on problems such as water crisis.

He said the move is a long-term solution to the water crisis that the country, particularly MetroMa-

nila, has been experiencing as one of the effects of El Niño.

"Pang-matagalang solusyon po ang pagkakaroon ng Department of Water Resources Management na kinakailangang maisabatas sa lalong madaling panahon," Tolentino said.

"Ang isyu ng climate change na siyang ugat ng El Niño at ng iba pang mga matitinding kalamidad ay hindi na ma-re-reverse, subalit maaaring mabawasan ang epekto nito lalung-lalo na sa kalusugan at kabuhayan ng mga tao. Dapat

lamang na maging mabilis ang aksyon ng pamahalaan sa mga pagkakatong ito," he added.

Tolentino also called on the public to do necessary preparations for the extreme heat and longer water crisis.

Even before the onset of the dry spell, Tolentino has warned about El Niño and the subsequent water crisis that could massively affect the health and livelihood of the Filipinos.

"Kung matatandaan po ng ating mga kababayan, ako po ang unang bumoses

sa paparating na krisis sa tubig at sa paghagupit ng El Niño. Matagal ko na pong iminumungkahi ang pagtatatag ng Department of Water Resources Management na magiging punong ahensiya ng ating pamahalaan para sa pangangasiwa at pangangalaga sa tubig sa bansa, at maging sa pagharap sa mga krisis sa tubig na gaya ng nararanasan ngayon hindi lamang sa Kamaynilaan kungdi maging sa ibang bahagi ng bansa," Tolentino said.

Jester P. Manalastas



Epekto ng El Niño, titindi pa

NI ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Titindi pa ang magiging epekto ng El Niño sa bansa sa susunod na mga buwan.

Ito ang babala kahapon ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), at sinabing lalo pa itong magdudulot ng mainit at tuyot na panahon sa malaking bahagi ng bansa.

Inaasahan na rin ng PAGASA na magkaroon ng below average rainfall sa malaking bahagi ng Pilipinas sa Abril, at sa Mayo, makararanas naman ng below normal rainfall ang ilang bahagi ng Southern Luzon at Visayas.

Inaasahan ding maitatala ng PAGASA ang below average rainfall sa malaking parte ng Luzon, maliban sa silangang bahagi nito, pagsapit ng Hunyo.

Babala ng ahensiya sa publiko, asahan na rin ang mararanasahg "near average to slightly warmer" na temperatura sa tinukoy na panahon.

Binanggit naman sa inilabas na international climate model na magpapatuloy ang epekto ng El Niño hanggang sa third quarter

ng taon, at inaasahang hihina na ito sa huling tatlong buwan ng 2019.

Sinabi pa ng PAGASA na kahit hindi pa gaanong nararamdaman ang

epekto ng El Niño, naaapektuhan na nito ang sektor ng agrikultura, water at marine resources, kalusugan ng tao, at kapaligiran.



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SAMPUNG ESTABLISIMYENTO SA BORACAY LUMABAG SA 30-METER EASEMENT RULE

BINUWAG ng isang inter-agency task force ng gobyerno nitong nakaraang Martes (March 19) ang mga pasaway na establisimyento sa Boracay na nabigong gibain ang kanilang ari-arian na lumabag sa 30-meter easement rule, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Hindi na nagdalawang-isip pa ang Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) na pinamumunuan ng DENR na gibain ang establisimyento ng Boracay Plaza Beach Resort matapos magbigay ng 15 araw na palugit. Ang naturang resort ay may mga istrakturang nakatayo sa mahigit-kumulang 1,000 square meter na nakapaloob sa easement zone.

Maliban sa Boracay Plaza na pag-aari ng isang nagngangalang Anita Aguirre ay sumunod naman sa ibinigay

na palugit ang ibang establisimyento at kusang giniba ang kani-kanilang mga istraktura matapos mabigyan din ng "warning" ng BIATF dahil na rin sa kanilang paglabag.

Ang ibinigay na "ultimatum" ay binanggit ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu sa ginanap na pulong ng task force nitong nakalipas na Pebrero 28.

"Erring establishments had already been given more than enough time to shape up since the closure," anang Cimatu.

"It would be unfair to those who voluntarily demolished and complied with the easement rule if we will not enforce the law to those who did not," dagdag pa nito.

Bukod sa paglabag sa ipinatutupad na "easement rule", napatunayan din na walang kaukulang permiso ang Boracay Plaza para

makapag-operate.

Tatlong beses na ring nabigyan ng kautusan ang Boracay Plaza na kusang i-demolish ang establisimyento ngunit binalewala lamang ito ng may-ari. Ang una ay noong Abril 26 ng nakalipas na taon nang pansamantalang isinara ang Isla ng Boracay ng anim na buwan para sa rehabilitasyon.

Ang ginawang demolisyon ay pinangunahan niña BIATF management group General Manager at DENR Director Natividad Bernardino, kasama sina Akian provincial police chief Senior Supt. Lope Manlapaz, Malay Acting Mayor Abram Sualog, mga kinatawan ng Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) at Department of Tourism (DOT), at mga abogado ng DENR.

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

Inilulat ni Bernardino na siyam na iba pang establisimyento na nabigyan ng 15-day ultimatum noong March 4 ang kusang nag-demolish ng kanilang istraktura habang ang iba ay nagsisimula na ring gibain nang kusa ang kanilang ari-arian.

Ang naturang siyam ay ang Blue Lily Hotel, Calveston International Inc., Exclusive Dawn VIP Boracay Resort, Little Prairie Inn, New Wave Divers, Steve's Cliff/Boracay Terraces Resort, True Homes, Watercolors Dive Shop at Willy's Rock Resort.

Ang sampung establisimyento kabilang ang Boracay Plaza ang mga natitirang istraktura sa tinatawag na "White Beach" na kailangang gibain upang tuluyang maipatupad ang 30-meter beach easement law.



MGA ka-idol, napapanahong isyu ngayon ang polusyon na napagtuunan lamang ng pansin sa panahon ng panunungkulan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Pero hindi lang ang Pinas ang humaharap sa problemang ito kundi halos lahat ng bansa.

Ang polusyon ay pagbabago sa kapaligiran na masamang nakaaapekto sa kalusugan ng halaman, hayop at tao.

Sinasabi sa WikiAnswer, ang mga uri ng polusyon ay ang polusyon

sa hangin, lupa, tubig at ingay.

Ang polusyon sa hangin ay sanhi ng makabagong teknolohiya na galing sa mga pagawaan, o usok ng mga sasakyan.

Kahit sa simpleng paniniganilyo lang at pag-susunog ng kung ano-anong bagay ay maaaring pagmulan ng polusyong ito.

Ang polusyon sa lupa ay sanhi ng pagkawala ng disiplina ng mga tao o mamamayan sa isang komunidad.

Madalas makita ang mga kalat sa paligid at ang nagiging sanhi nito.

Walang nag-aakala subalit ang simpleng kalat ay nagdudulot ng pagkalaki-laki at pagkarami-raming basura sa isang komunidad.

Ang polusyong ingay ay dulot ng sobrang dami ng populasyon sa isang komunidad.

Ang polusyon naman sa tubig ay naidudulot ng pagkawala ng disiplina ng mga tao o mamamayan sa isang komunidad tulad ng paggamit ng mga mangingisda ng pampasabog.

Sa akin namang sariling pananaw, ang sanhi ng polusyon ay ang

kapabayaang rin ng ating mga mamamayan.

Sino pa ba ang may kakayahang pangalagaan ito o ang magbibigay ng aksyon?

Siguradong kung kaya itong pangalagaan, kaya rin nila itong pabayaan.

Hindi na nga ito mayadong napagtutuunan ng pansin ay nakagawa pa ng mga masasamang bagay na makaaapekto sa kalikasan.

Ang nakaaambag pa sa paglala ng polusyon ay ang tapon doon, tapon dito, buga roon, buga rito.

Wala man lang pakialam ang mga tao sa kanilang mga ginagawang

aksiyon.

Hindi nila alam na halos lahat ng napakikibangan nating bagay ay nanggagaling sa kalikasan.

Sa kanila rin babalik ang lahat ng mga negatibong epekto 'pag tuluyan nang nasira ang kalikasan dahil sa polusyon.

Mabuti na lamang at sa panahon ni Pangulong Duterte ay may mga masisipag na tao sa kanyang gabinete, tulad sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ang mga opisyal na nakaupo ngayon sa tanggapang ito ay ang tala-gang nagpapahalaga sa yamang kalikasan natin.

NAPAPANAHONG ISYU ANG POLUSYON



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Search on for ways to solve plastics problem

A DEAD whale washed ashore on a beach in Compostela Valley in Mindanao last Friday. An examination of the body showed it had ingested 40 kilograms of plastic. It had subsequently died of starvation and dehydration.

A week earlier, we published a front-page photo of a crab trapped inside a discarded milk tea cup in the Verde Island passage in Batangas City. The photo, a release of international environmental group Greenpeace showed the increasing incidence of sealife dying from the plastic wastes mounting in the seas around our islands.

As early as 2017, Greenpeace reported the finding that the Philippines is the world's third worst plastic polluter of the world's oceans after China and Indonesia. We are among the foremost consumers of food, medicine, and other products marketed in plastic sachets, bottles, and bags. Three US companies were named as the world's foremost producers of these common consumer products sold in cheap disposable plastics.

A multi-sectoral coalition has now been organized by several top corporations involved in the production and distribution of consumer goods – the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS) – dedicated to finding ways to meet the growing problem of plastic pollution.

It signed early this month an agreement with the Parañaque City government for the installation of a plastic waste recycling and research and development center in barangay La Huerta. Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, witnessed the signing ceremony and lauded the initiative taken by the city government and the private companies which had formed the coalition.

The senator is pushing for the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), an environmental protection strategy now being practiced in European countries requiring manufacturers using plastic materials in their packaging to be responsible for recovering the plastic waste they caused, through such means as reuse, buy-back, and recycling.

The Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance already has a factory in Las Piñas producing armchairs made from such wastes as food wrappers. Twenty kilos of such "soft plastics" can be processed to produce one chair. The chairs thus produced are being donated to public schools in the country.

India and several other countries have come up with ways to use waste plastic mixed with bitumen for road construction. Australia, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and the US are among the countries now developing technology to incorporate plastic waste into asphalt mix.

Plastic pollution has long been a problem worldwide because plastic does not decompose. Wood, paper, and other materials dumped into landfills will disintegrate in time, but not plastic. The volume of waste plastic will keep mounting until there is no more space in landfills. A great deal of it ends in the sea where it is consumed by sea animals which mistake it for food and it kills them eventually. One study found that bits of plastic had become embedded in the flesh of some fish, thus posing a danger to fish-eating humans.

We thus welcome increasing efforts to solve the problem of plastic wastes, such as those of the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability. Around the world, new ways are being found to process plastics so they can be used for new products such as chairs in Las Piñas and roads in India. Perhaps someday scientists will discover a way to make plastic biodegradable like wood and the other products of our natural world, but until then we must learn to recycle plastics to save our environment.



EDITORIAL

Humanap ng paraan upang masolusyunan ang problema sa plastic

Isang patay na balyena ang inanod sa baybayin ng Compostela Valley sa Mindanao nitong nakaraang Biyernes. Sa pagsusuri sa katawan nito, lumalabas na nakakain ito ng nasa 40 kilo ng plastic, na kalaunan ay namatay dahil sa gutom at dehydration.

Isang linggo bago nito, inilabas namin sa unang pahina ang isang larawan ng alimasag na nakulong sa loob ng isang itina-pon milk tea cup sa Verde Island passage sa lungsod ng Batangas. Ipinapakita sa larawan, na ibinahagi ng international environmental group na Greenpeace ang lumalalang insidente ng mga namamatay na lamang-dagat mula sa mga basurang plastic na natatambak sa mga dagat sa paligid ng ating mga isla.

Taong 2017 pa iniulat ng Greenpeace ang resulta ng isang pag-aaral na ang Pilipinas ang ikatlo sa mundo na nagdudulot ng pulusyon sa plastic sa mga karagatan sunod sa China at Indonesia. Kabilang tayo sa mga nangungunang bumibili ng mga pagkain, gamot at iba pang produkto na ibinebenta na nakalagay sa mga pakete ng plastic, bote at bag. Tatlong kumpanya ng US ang kinilala bilang "world's foremost producers" ng mga ganitong karaniwang produkto na ibinebenta sa mga murang disposable plastic.

Isang multi-sectoral coalition na ngayon ay inoorganisa ng ilang nangungunang korporasyon na sangkot sa produksiyon at pamamahagi ng produkto — ang Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS — ang nangako na hahanap ng paraan upang matugunan ang lumalalang problema sa polusyon sa plastic.

Nitong unang bahagi ng buwan, lumagda ito sa isang kasunduan kasama ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Paranaque para sa pagtatayo ng isang plastic waste recycling and research and development center sa barangay La Huerta. Saksi sa naging paglagda sa seremonya si Senadora Cynthia Villar, pinuno ng Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources na pinuri ang inisyatibo na isinagawa ng lungsod kasama ng mga pribadong kumpanya na bumuo ng koalisyon.

Isinusulong ng senador ang konsepto ng Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), isang estratehiya para sa pangangalaga sa kalikasan na ngayon ay ginagawa na sa mga bansa sa Europa, na nagtatakda sa mga pabrika na gumagamit sa mga materyales na plastic sa kanilang mga packaging na maging responsable sa pagkuha at pagsamsam ng mga basurang plastic na kanilang nilikha, sa pamamagitan ng pag-reuse, buy-back, at recycling.

Ang Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance ay mayroon nang isang pabrika sa Las Pinas na gumagawa ng mga armchair o upuan na gawa sa mga basura tulad ng mga pabalat ng pagkain. Ang dalawampung kilo ng "soft plastics" ay maaaring iproseso upang makalikha ng isang upuan. Habang ang mga nabubuong upuan ay ibinibigay sa mga pampublikong paaralan sa bansa.

Nakaisip na rin ang India at ilang bansa ng paraan upang gamitin ang mga basurang plastic at ihalo sa bitumen para sa paggawa ng mga kalsada. Ang bansa ng Australia, Indonesia, United Kingdom at ang US ay kabilang sa mga bansa na bumubuo ng teknolohiya upang maisama ang mga basurang plastic sa halo ng aspalto.

Matagal nang problema ng mundo ang polusyon sa plastic dahil hindi ito nabubulok. Ang mga kahoy, papel at iba pang materyales na itinatambak sa mga landfill ay malulusaw o mabubulok sa paglipas ng panahon, ngunit hindi ang plastic. Ang dami ng plastic ay patuloy na madaradagan hanggang sa wala nang matirang espasyo sa mga landfills. Malaking bulto nito ang napupunta sa mga dagat kung saan ito kinakain ng mga lamang-dagat sa pag-aakalang pagkain na kalaunan ay ikamamatay nila. Natuklasan sa isang pag-aaral na may mga butil ng plastic ang dumidikit at sumasama sa laman ng ilang isda, na maaaring magdulot ng panganiib sa mga tao na kumakain ng mga lamang-dagat.

Kaya naman ikinakagalak natin ang tumataas na pagsisikap para solusyunan ang problema sa plastic, tulad ng naging hakbang ng Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability. Sa iba't ibang bahagi ng mundo, may mga bagong paraan ang natutuklasan upang iproseso ang mga plastic at pakinabangan bilang bagong produkto tulad ng upuan sa Las Pinas at kalsada sa India. Marahil sa hinaharap makatutuklas ang mga siyentista ng paraan kung paano mabubulok ang mga plastic tulad ng kahoy at iba pang produkto ng kalikasan, ngunit hanggang maisakatuparan ito, kinakailangan nating matutunan kung paano maire-recycle ang plastic upang mailigtas ang kapaligiran.



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Estero de Magdalena

tinutukan na naman ng PRRC

Muling pinangunahan ng Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) ang malawakang paglilinis at clearing operation sa Estero de Magdalena sanhi ng walang pakundangang pagtatapon ng basura ng mga residente sa mga barangay na dinadaluyan ng nasabing estero nito ng Huwebes.

Kamakailan lamang, nakatuon ang atensiyon ng PRRC sa paglilinis ng Estero de Magdalena.

Mula Nobyembre 2015 hanggang Hulyo 3 2018, naihatag ng PRRC sa 1,049 informal settler families (ISFs) mula sa target na 2,015 sa iba't ibang relocation site sa Bulacan at Cavite upang masimulan na ang konstruksiyon ng P17 milyong Estero de

Magdalena linear park development.

Ngunit hindi pa rin ito pinangalagaan ng mga pamilyang nakatira malapit sa estero dahil sa ulat na may nagsipagtayuang kabahayan muli sa Estero de Magdalena kaya nagbabala na si PRRC Executive Director Jose Antonio 'Ka Pepeton' E. Goitia sa mga barangay official at local government unit.

"This morning I ordered all efforts of PRRC to be concentrated again in Estero de Magdalena. Please, kung 'di kaya hayaan na lang kami ang gumawa ng paglilinis at relocation. To all the LGU's responsible we will file all the cases against you. Puro kayo pangako sa conference," sabi ni Goitia.

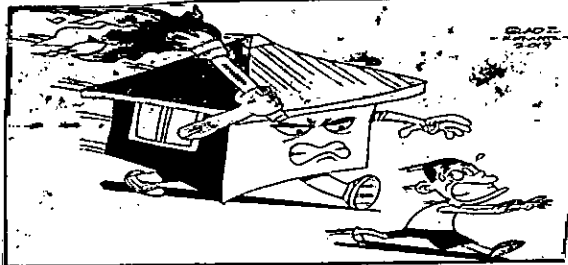


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DELIKADO ANG TAG-INIT

PORMAL nang inianunsyo ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration ang simula ng tag-init.

Sa tag-init, narriyan ang paglitaw ng mga matinding sakit gaya ng heat stroke na nakamamatay at sore eyes na kung umatake ay buong pamilya.

Narriyan din ang pagtuloy-tuloy ng tigdas na ikinahahawa ng nasa 18 katao mula sa lisang may sakit nito nakapatay na ng halos 350 katao simula noong Enero 2019.

May sakit din sa balat sa tindi ng init mula sa ultra violet ray at lalaganap din ang pigsa.

Kasabay ng pagkakasakit ng tao ang pagkasira rin ng mga halaman at pagkakalugi ng mga magsasaka.

Narriyan din ang mga peste sa mga hayup, gaya ng mga baboy at manok, at fish kill sa mga lawa at llog na matindi rin ang epekto sa mga naghahayupan at mangingisda.

Iba pa ang karaniwang nagaganap na sunog tuwing malnit ang panahon sanhi ng overheating ng mga pampalamig na appliance gaya ng mga electric fan at aircondition.

Maging ang mga sasakyan ay naapektuhan ng sobrang init ng panahon at may nasusunog din sa mga ito.

Sa ibang salita, sa kabila ng saya ng tao sa pagdating ng tag-init dahil wala ang mga nakamamatay na bagyo at baha, narriyan din ang parating na banta ng tag-init sa buhay at ari-arian ng milyon-milyong Filipino.

Kaya naman, magandang makipag-ugnayan ang mga mamamayan sa mga kinauukulan upang mapigilan ang mga perwisyonong dumarating sa tag-araw at kung paano malabanan ang mga ito kung nagaganap na.

Maganda ring mag-uusap-usap ang mga magkakabahay, magkapatibahay o magkaka-barangay kung paano harapin ang mga problema ng tag-init at magtulong-tulong na rin para masolusyunan o mapigilan ang mga ito.



Pangasinan black sand case: Trial to proceed

DAGUPAN CITY—The Sandiganbayan would proceed with the trial of former governor now Rep. Amado Espino and two other former officials of Pangasinan province over black sand extraction in the town of Lingayen during Espino's term in the provincial government.

The antigraft court, however, dismissed conspiracy charges against five officials of two mining firms involved in the extraction.

Aside from Espino, trial would proceed against former provincial administrator Rafael Baraan and former provincial housing officer Alvin Bigay.

The case stemmed from the alleged unlawful permission granted by the local officials, led by Espino, for unqualified companies to extract black sand in the Lingayen Gulf in 2011.

Cleared

In the 20-page decision dated Jan. 28 but made public only recently, the Sandiganbayan dismissed for insufficiency of evidence the charges against Cynthia Camara, Gina Alcazar, Ann Lyn Detera, Denise Ann Sia Kho



Amado Espino —EDWIN BACASMAS

Po and Glenn Subia.

They were either incorporators or board directors of Xypher Builders Inc. and Alexandra Mining and Oil Ventures Inc. or Amovi.

The two mining firms conducted black sand extraction in the coastal villages of Lingayen after Espino granted them permits.

The Sandiganbayan decision, which was issued after the accused filed a joint demurrer to

evidence, said the five mining officials' interest in the companies did not render them privy to the alleged illegal mining.

"The prosecution failed to allege and prove the precise degree of participation of the said accused in the offense charged," said the decision.

Suspension served

Lawyer Nolan Evangelista, counsel of Espino and other local officials, said the Sandiganbayan decision was not against his clients.

"The decision was in so far as some members of the board of Alexandra Mining and Oil Ventures Inc. and Xypher Builders Inc. are concerned," Evangelista said.

He said Espino and Baraan did not file a demurrer, giving way to a full-blown trial.

In a demurrer, the defense asserts that even if all the factual allegations are true, they are insufficient to establish a valid cause of action.

Evangelista said only Bigay filed a demurrer, which the court did not grant.

In December 2016 while al-

ready Pangasinan representative, Espino served the 90-day preventive suspension order issued against him by the Sandiganbayan in connection with the illegal mining case.

Permits

The Sandiganbayan said Espino and Baraan, as governor and provincial administrator, were the ones responsible for the issuance of small-scale mining permit (SSMP) to Amovi and the government gratuitous permit (GGP) to Xypher.

This was despite the two companies' apparent lack of requirements, such as registration with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board, area clearance from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and business permit (in the case of Amovi) from the Lingayen town government.

The issuance of SSMP and GGP paved the way for the extraction of black sand in the coastal areas of Barangay Capandan, Estanza, Sabangan and Malimpuc. —WITH REPORTS FROM YOLANDA SOTELO AND GABRIEL CARDINOZA INQ

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Legislators apprised on PHL biosafety regulations

MORE than 100 Legislative officials from the House of Representatives and selected members of the Philippine Judicial Academy (Philja) were apprised on the Philippine regulatory system for genetically modified crops in a briefing held at the House of Representatives on February 27.

In the latest briefing, the legislative officials were given thorough information on the Philippine Regulatory System for Genetically Modified Crops: DOST-DA-DENR-DOH-DILG Joint Department Circular (JDC) No. 1, series of 2016.

Representatives from the Departments of Agriculture (DA), Health (DOH), Science and Technology (DOST), the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) explained to the participants the new regulatory guidelines on biotech crops.

They also provided factual and science-based information pertaining to the science, as well as the environmental and food safety of biotech products.

Expressing his support, Rep. Erico Aristotle Aumentado, chairman of the House Committee on Science and Technology,

said legislation should be more empirical and scientific. Donald Caballero, Secretary of the Committee on S&T, read Aumentado's message on his behalf.

Aumentado also noted that the activity is an innovation toward the realization of Research for Development (R4D), which will strengthen the role of science and basic research in creating meaningful governance through policy-making and legislation.

Meanwhile, Director-Coordinator Annalyn Lopez of the DA-Biotechnology Program Office (DA-BPO), noted that though some find the current regulatory

requirements to be a hurdle, science has enabled the evolution of regulatory approaches, and it can be used to improve the effectiveness and agility of the country's regulatory system.

The briefing was organized by the DA-BPO, the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture Biotechnology Information Center and the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications. It was the tenth in the series of public briefings held nationwide by the DA-BPO, Searca and ISAAA since 2015.



Search on for ways to solve plastics problem

A DEAD whale washed ashore on a beach in Compostela Valley in Mindanao last Friday. An examination of the body showed it had ingested 40 kilograms of plastic. It had subsequently died of starvation and dehydration.

A week earlier, we published a front-page photo of a crab trapped inside a discarded milk tea cup in the Verde Island passage in Batangas City. The photo, a release of international environmental group Greenpeace showed the increasing incidence of sealife dying from the plastic wastes mounting in the seas around our islands.

As early as 2017, Greenpeace reported the finding that the Philippines is the world's third worst plastic polluter of the world's oceans after China and Indonesia. We are among the foremost consumers of food, medicine, and other products marketed in plastic sachets, bottles, and bags. Three US companies were named as the world's foremost producers of these common consumer products sold in cheap disposable plastics.

A multi-sectoral coalition has now been organized by several top corporations involved in the production and distribution of consumer goods - the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS) - dedicated to finding ways to meet the growing problem of plastic pollution.

It signed early this month an agreement with the Parañaque City government for the installation of a plastic waste recycling and research and development center in Barangay La Huerta. Sen. Cynthia Villar, chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, witnessed the signing ceremony and lauded the initiative taken by the city government and the private companies which had formed the coalition.

The senator is pushing for the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), an environmental protection strategy now being practiced

in European countries requiring manufacturers using plastic materials in their packaging to be responsible for recovering the plastic waste they caused, through such means as reuse, buy-back, and recycling.

The Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance already has a factory in Las Piñas producing armchairs made from such wastes as food wrappers. Twenty kilos of such "soft plastics" can be processed to produce one chair. The chairs thus produced are being donated to public schools in the country.

India and several other countries have come up with ways to use waste plastic mixed with bitumen for road construction. Australia, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and the US are among the countries now developing technology to incorporate plastic waste into asphalt mix.

Plastic pollution has long been a problem worldwide because plastic does not decompose. Wood, paper, and other materials dumped into landfills will disintegrate in time, but not plastic. The volume of waste plastic will keep mounting until there is no more space in landfills. A great deal of it ends in the sea where it is consumed by sea animals which mistake it for food and it kills them eventually. One study found that bits of plastic had become embedded in the flesh of some fish, thus posing a danger to fish-eating humans.

We thus welcome increasing efforts to solve the problem of plastic wastes, such as those of the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability. Around the world, new ways are being found to process plastics so they can be used for new products such as chairs in Las Piñas and roads in India. Perhaps someday scientists will discover a way to make plastic biodegradable like wood and the other products of our natural world, but until then we must learn to recycle plastics to save our environment.



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CLEANUP Members of the Bureau of Fire Protection collect garbage during the coastal cleanup held on Saturday at the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area. PHOTO DJ DIOSINA



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Off season

“ It turns out that foreign sources of funding are fast drying up and droves of regular NPA are surrendering.

Through age and the comfort of life in his European exile, Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder and chairman Jose Maria Sison is waging a new battle, which is to fend off the creeping prospect of irrelevance.

Joma has to be in the headlines and, thus far, he remains an item primarily among the yellow media outlets which relish anything that can demonize Rody.

Joma is at his best when it comes to propaganda, but with the decision of President Rodrigo Duterte to permanently terminate the peace talks, he soon loses a venue for deception.

For so long, the military had known of Joma and the CPP's ploy to use the peace process to bolster its international profile and raise funds for the armed rebellion.

Sison has been giving the government the runaround since 1988 when he first talked with the late President Cory Aquino and he has been employing the same tactic for every new President over five administrations.

The result was the terror operations of the CPP's armed wing New People's Army (NPA) have grown as a result of stepped up recruitment using the space created through the negotiations while Joma tried to project himself as a peacemaker.

Rody was able to turn the tables around simply by shutting the doors on Joma after throwing them wide open and welcoming him in his arms and giving up what his predecessors were not willing even to offer to the communist movement.

Rody frightened many when he offered to relinquish to Joma four Cabinet posts, the Departments of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Environment and Natural Resources, Labor and Employment and Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), when he started the presidency.

Later on, Rody appointed UP professor Judy Taguiwalo and former Anakpawis partylist Rep. Rafael Mariano to head the DSWD and DAR, respectively. He also appointed former Gabriela partylist Rep. Liza Maza as secretary of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

The worry about a coalition government then arose.

Rody dispelled such fears when he showed that the situation was completely under government control and his move was meant to induce the underground movement to join the mainstream.

Joma, however, has his own agenda which was again to exploit the talks for the gain of the movement he founded.

In the termination of the negotiations, however, Joma and his group were the biggest losers since there may not be another President as receptive as Rody to their demands.

The President scrapped the peace negotiations in early 2017 after the CPP-NPA carried out consecutive attacks on security forces and civilians despite existing unilateral ceasefires.

“ The Muslims are taking a beating in some parts of the world.



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OFF Season

Lately, the CPP's negotiating body, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, has been sending feelers of their willingness to return to the negotiating table.

It turns out that, based on military intelligence reports, foreign sources of funding are fast drying up and droves of regular NPA are surrendering under the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program or E-CLIP.

The CPP and its legal fronts had long associations with rich European groups for regular funding, but these are now becoming scarce due the information campaign launched by the government overseas.

Earlier, Rody had said he wanted an investigation on the CPP fronts to establish possible money laundering.

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“You legal fronts, listen to me. We are not stupid. I was also handling an organization of the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, which is Karapatan now,” he said. “Let us stop fooling each other.”

The military in a recent report said Karapatan is doomed to share the fate of Joma in becoming irrelevant due to the absence of rights violation for the past five years while complaints of abuses and civilian killings by the NPA disguised as soldiers have been rising.

Karapatan even had to fabricate reports of rights violations for fund-raising purposes.

The Reds' propaganda mill stops when the lies are exposed and nobody is willing to listen to them anymore.