

DATE : 24 JUN 2019

DAY : Monday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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DENR tells public: Grow trees to beat air pollution

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) appealed to the public to plant more trees saying trees play an important role in reducing and beating air pollution, especially in urban areas like Metro Manila.

The appeal was made as part of tomorrow's celebration of Philippine Arbor Day.

The celebration of Philippine Arbor Day is mandated under Presidential Proclamation No. 643, s-2004 and Republic Act No. 10176, respectively.

Arbor is a Latin word which means tree. Arbor day is an age-old tradition where individuals and groups are encouraged to plant trees.

According to Arizol Abad, of DENR-National Capital Region Public Affairs Office, the theme for the celebration in Metro Manila is "Grow More Trees and Beat Air Pollution."

Abad explained that the theme is in accordance with the United Nation's call action to combat air pollution.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that air pollution has become the "single biggest environmental health risk" that people around the world are facing today.

The WHO added that the environmental problem kills more people than malaria and HIV/AIDS and causes harm to the natural environment as well.

Abad said that the highlight of the celebration is the conduct of massive simultaneous tree planting activity at the beach area of Baseco in Tondo, Manila and in different NCR-based campuses of Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP).

"By planting and growing trees, we improve air quality at the local level and contribute to greener and cleaner environment. Trees clean the air for everyone, giving us fresh supply of oxygen. Likewise, trees absorb carbon dioxide, lower ambient heat and mitigate the impact of climate change," Abad said.

Cory Martinez

House to probe Metro water shortage

By DJ Yap
and Matthew Reysio-Cruz
@Team_Inquirer

The House of Representatives is opening its oversight hearing on the water shortage in Metro Manila on Tuesday as the metropolis remains parched despite the onset of the rainy season and the drop of water in Angat Dam to critically low levels.

In one of her last orders as House leader, Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo called for the investigation into the persistent water troubles, which began in March and continued through the peak of the dry season.

The chamber invited officials of water concessionaires Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad

Water Services Inc., Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

Representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Public Works and Highways, and the National Economic and Development Authority were also called to the hearing.

Arroyo said the impending water shortage was brought to her attention by acting LWUA Administrator Jeci Lapus who sought solutions for the Angat

Dam problem, as well as long-term measures to prevent a water crisis.

Angat Dam water levels

Reports over the weekend showed that Angat Dam, which supplies water to Metro Manila and Central Luzon, might hit the 160-meter critical level in one or two days. If that happens, allocation for Metro Manila's water supply may be reduced.

As of 6 a.m. on Saturday, water level at the dam already dropped to 159.78 meters, well below its minimum operating water level of 180 meters.

Aside from the water shortage, the House oversight committee will also look into the proposed creation of a Depart-

ment of Water, which will be evaluated by the panel for the next Congress to act upon. The next Congress opens on July 22.

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) said it was prepared to deploy its fleet of 20 water tankers to establishments in the metropolis where water was most vital.

Sen. Richard Gordon, PRC chair, ordered water tankers and treatment equipment to be readied amid the stream of bleak news from NWRB, which was giving updates on the dam's water level.

Hospitals

Manila Water and Maynilad have started implementing a new round of water interruptions throughout the capital.

"Just like last March, we are prepared to deploy our water tankers to supply water to most critical establishments, especially hospitals," Gordon said in a statement, adding that the tankers were equipped to supply "high-pressure water systems."

At the height of the crisis in March, when Manila Water's allegedly bungled response to critical water levels at La Mesa Dam crippled entire communities for weeks, PRC supplied 1,435,475 liters of water around Metro Manila.

The bulk was distributed to affected hospitals, including the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, East Avenue Medical Center, Rizal Medical Center, National Center for Mental

Health and Quirino Memorial Medical Center.

Some of the hospitals were even forced to start issuing advisories to patients asking them to use water sparingly.

"If the water level in Angat Dam dips further, PRC will prioritize hospitals to ensure that health care services will not be interrupted and to avoid health complications such as sepsis, diarrhea and other hygiene-related diseases," the group said.

PRC also brought water to some of the hardest hit communities in March, including Barangay Tumana in Marikina City, Barangay Addition Hills in Mandaluyong City and Barangays Old Balara and Culiati in Quezon City. INQ



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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CARTOON

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House sets oversight hearing on impending water shortage

By **CHARISSA M. LUCI-ATIENZA**

The House of Representatives will look into the impending water shortage on Tuesday with Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo leading the oversight hearing.

Arroyo sought the hearing after Angat Dam in Bulacan, which supplies water to Metro Manila and Central Luzon, neared critical level.

Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) Acting Administrator Jeci Lapus has asked the House leadership to step in and find solutions for the Angat water, which may hit critical level in one or two days. He batted for the implementation of long-term measures to prevent a water crisis from happening.

It has been warned that if the dam hits the 160-meter critical level, the allocation for Metro Manila's water supply would be reduced.

According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Angat Dam has dipped to 160.73-meter mark as of 6 a.m. last Friday.

Arroyo counted on the officials of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems (MWSS), National Water Resources Bureau (NWRB), LWUA, and National Irrigation Authority (NIA) to attend the hearing at 10 am.

Also expected to attend the hearing are officials from Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources and Public Works and Highways, NEDA and water concessionaires Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI), and the Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (MWSD).

Arroyo noted that the proposed creation of a Department of Water will be included in the agenda. The measure



ARROYO

"will be evaluated by the committee for the next Congress to act upon," she said.

Last March, the House leadership launched an oversight hearing on the water crisis affecting the east sector of Metro Manila. This prodded Maynilad to open five

of its surplus valves and Manila Water to supply 50 million of water to ease the burden of the estimated 1.2 million households in the area.

The House also adopted two resolutions, both principally authored by Arroyo, seeking to address the water crisis in Metro Manila.

House Resolution No. 2547 sought the formation of a technical working group that would enhance and execute mitigation strategies to avert the occurrence of water shortage in Metro Manila and provide sustainable supply of clean and safe water for its citizens now and in the future.

While, House Resolution No. 2548 sought the formulation of a water security masterplan to secure and sustain the supply of water for household, commercial, and industrial uses in Metro Manila that may be duplicated in other parts of the country.

"The recent water shortage in Metro Manila serves as an eye opener that warned government regulators to be proactive particularly in the dry season to address water service problems immediately," it said.



House oversight panel seeks to find solutions to water shortage

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

THE leadership of the House of Representatives will open on Tuesday an oversight hearing to look into the impending water shortage as Angat Dam in Bulacan reaches critical level.

Last week Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo called for an oversight hearing on the water shortage on Tuesday, before new members of the House of Representatives begin their term of office.

Invited to the hearing are officials from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems (MWSS), National Water Resources Bureau, Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), National Ir-

rigation Authority, Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources and Public Works and Highways, the National Economic and Development Authority and water concessionaires Manila Water Co. Inc. (MWCI), and the Maynilad Water Services Inc. (MWSI).

LWUA Acting Administrator Jeci Lopus said the agency is now seeking for solutions for the Angat water problem, as well as long-term measures to prevent a water crisis from happening.

Arroyo said the proposed creation of a Department of Water will be included in the agenda, which will be evaluated by the committee for the next Congress to act upon.

Last March, at the height of the

water crisis in the east side of Metro Manila, the lower chamber also conducted an oversight hearing to help find solutions to the problem. As a result, Maynilad agreed to open five of its surplus valves with Manila Water to supply 50 million liters of water per day (MLD) to ease the burden of the estimated 1.2 million households in the area.

Exempted

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said over the weekend that trucks of MWSI and MWCI are still exempted from the number-coding scheme to facilitate the delivery of water supplies to different areas experiencing water shortage.

"We have a standing order authorizing tankers bringing water to af-

ected areas, with no restrictions on number coding," said Danilo Lim.

As the water level of Angat Dam continues to drop, the Metro Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (MMDRRMC), chaired by Lim, concerned government agencies and water concessionaires, had discussed contingency measures on how to prepare for a worsening water shortage last week.

"The public, especially those located in vulnerable areas, must know what to expect with the water level of Angat Dam now at critical level," said Lim during a special MMDRRMC meeting.

The meeting was attended by officials of MWSS and water concessionaires, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services

Administration (Pagasa), and other concerned government agencies.

During the meeting, Pagasa said that while it had declared the start of the rainy season last week, the amount of rainfall is still not enough to boost the water level of Angat Dam.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) assured its readiness to supply water to critical establishments that could be affected by the impending water shortage in Metro Manila as the water level in Angat Dam nears critical level.

PRC Chairman Richard Gordon gave orders to prepare PRC's fleet of water tankers and water treatment equipment.

If the water level in Angat Dam dips further, PRC will prioritize hos-

pitals to ensure that health-care services will not be interrupted and to avoid health complications, such as sepsis, diarrhea, and other hygiene-related diseases.

During the first wave of water crisis last March to April, PRC was able to supply 1,435,475 liters of clean and safe water to hospitals such as National Kidney and Transplant Institute, East Avenue Medical Center, Rizal Medical Center, National Center for Mental Health and Quirino Memorial Medical Center.

PRC also served affected communities, Barangay Old Balara and Barangay Culiati in Quezon City; Barangay Nangka and Barangay Tumana in Marikina; and Barangay Addition Hills in Mandaluyong.

With a report from Claudeth Mocon-Ciriaco



Kakapusan ng tubig sa Angat Dam sisilipin

PINASISILIP ni outgoing House Speaker at dating Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ang nagaganap na kawalan ng tubig dahil sa unti-unting pagkaubos ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa Bulacan.

Nangalampag na si Arroyo ukol sa posibilidad ng pagkawala ng tubig matapos ilapit sa kanya ni Local Water Utilities Administration Acting Administrator Jeci Lapus kung ano ang solusyon upang matugunan ang problema sa Angat at kung paano maiiwasan ang krisis sa tubig sa hinaharap.

Ayon sa ulat, ang tubig sa Angat Dam na nagsusuplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila at Central Luzon ay maaaring umabot sa critical level sa loob ng dalawang araw.

Maaaring magdulot ito ng pagbabawas sa suplay ng tubig sa Kamaynilaan kapag umabot na sa 160-meter critical level ang tubig.

Kabilang sa kokonsultahin sa pagdingig sa Martes ang mga opisyal ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems, National Water Resources Bureau, LWUA, National Irrigation Authority, Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources and Public Works and Highways, NEDA and water concessionaires Manila Water Company, Inc. at Maynilad Water Services, Inc.

Kabilang sa tatalakayin ang pagpayag ng Maynilad na buksan ang lima sa surplus valves nito upang makapagsuplay sa 1.2 milyong tahanan. Dalawang panukalang resolusyon ang inihain ni upang matalakay ang krisis sa tubig sa Kamaynilaan.

Ito ay ang House Resolution No. 2547 na nagtutulak sa MWSS na kumilos kapag may napipintong krisis sa tubig at ang House Resolution No. 2548 na nananawagan MW-SS, MWSS-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO) NWRB, LWUA, BSWM, MWCI, at MWSI na maglatag ng water security masterplan.

MELIZA MALUNTAG



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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Kamara magsasagawa ng oversight hearing LONG-TERM SOLUTION SA KRISIS SA TUBIG

MULING ipatatawag ng Mababang Kapulungan ng Kongreso ang mga opisyal ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng pamahalaan kabilang ang Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) gayundin ang dalawang water concessionaires na Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI) at Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (MWSI) at iba pa, kaugnay sa isasagawa nitong 'oversight hearing' sa nararansang krisis sa suplay ng tubig bukas.

Mismong si Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, na bagama't nasa huling linggo na ng kanyang panunungkulan, ang siyang mangunguna sa nasabing pagdinig.

Ayon sa lady speaker, layunin ng

ipatatawag na oversight hearing ang mahapan ng solusyon ang naitalang pagbaba sa 'critical level' ng tubig sa Angat Dam, na pangunahing pinagkukunan ng suplay ng 'potable water' para sa mga residente ng Metro Manila gayundin sa irigasyon ng mga taniman sa Bulacan at mga karatig nitong lugar.

Dagdag ni Arroyo, sa pamamagitan ng pagpapatawag sa mga opisyal ng MWSS, MWCI, MWSI pati na ang National Water Resources Bureau (NWRB), Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), National Irrigation Authority (NIA), Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources at Public Works and Highways,

National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) at iba pa, umaasa rin siyang makabubuo sila ng 'long-term solutions' sa nasabing problema.

Base sa pinakahuling ulat ng Pagasa, nasa 159.78 meters na ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, na mas mababa sa itinakdang critical level nito na 160 meters.

Dahil dito, binawasan na ang alokasyon ng tubig para sa dalawang water concessionaire, na nagresulta sa pagkawala ng suplay ng tubig sa kani-kanilang customers, na tumatagal sa hindi bababa sa anim na oras hanggang sa halos 20 oras.

Maging ang mga magsasaka sa Bulacan ay dumadaing na rin dahil naantala na umano ang kanilang pagtatanim bunsod ng

kawalan ng sapat na irigasyon mula sa Bustos Dam, na ang tubig ay nagmumula rin sa Angat Dam.

Bukod sa pagtalakay sa 'water shortage', kasama rin sa agenda ng nasabing hearing ang panukalang pagtatatag ng Department of Water, na siyang ahensiya ng pamahalaan na pangunahing tututok sa usapin ng patubig sa bansa.

Magugunita na noong nakaraang buwan ng Marso ay pinamunuan din ni Arroyo ang 'oversight probe' bunsod sa nangyaring water crisis sa Metro Manila.

Sa naturang pagdinig ay nabuo ang pag-aatas sa MWCI at MWSI na magtulungan sa pagtitiyak na mayroon silang sapat na suplay ng tubig para sa

kanilang customers.

Bunsod nito, pumayag ang MWSI na buksan ang kanilang limang surplus valves upang dumaloy ang dagdag na 50 million cubic meters na tubig na magagamit ng MWCI.

Nakabuo rin ang lower house ng House Resolution No. 2548, na mariing hinihimok ang MWSS, MWSS-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO) NWRB, LWUA, BSWM, MWCI at MWSI na agarang bumalangkang ng 'water security masterplan' para matiyak ang pagkakaroon ng kinakailangan suplay ng tubig nang sa ganoon ay hindi na umano maulit pa ang dinanas ng mga taga-Metro Manila at maiwasang mangyari rin ito sa iba pang parte ng bansa.

ROMER BUTUYAN



Water shortage, sisilipin ng Kamara

Sisilipin ng Kamara, sa pagdining bukas, ang nararanasang krisis sa tubig sa Metro Manila.

Pangungunahan ni Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ang oversight hearing makaraang umabot na sa critical level ang tubig sa Angat Dam sa Bulacan, na nagsu-supply ng tubig sa Metro Manila at Central Luzon.

Hiniling ni Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) Acting Administrator Jeci Lapus sa lideratong Kamara na siyasatin ang problema at hanapan ng solusyon ang kakapusan ng tubig sa Angat.

Una nang iginiit ni Lapus ang pagpapatupad ng pangmatagalang hakbangin upang maiwasan ang krisis sa tubig.

Kinumpirma nitong Sabado ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical

and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) na nasa 159.78 metro na ang tubig sa Angat Dam, mas mababa pa sa critical level nitong 160 metro na naabot nitong Biyernes.

Kahapon ng umaga, bumaba pa sa 159.43 metro ang tubig sa Angat Dam.

Kasunod nito, inihayag ng National Water Resources Bureau (NWRB) na mula sa pinababa nang 40 cubic meters per second na water allocation sa Metro Manila, binawasan pa ito sa 36 cms, kasabay ng pagpapatupad ng mga water concessionaire ng arawang rotating water service interruptions.

Umaasa naman si Arroyo na dadalo sa hearing bukas, sa ganap na 10:00 ng umaga, ang mga opisyal

ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems (MWSS), NWRB, LWUA, at National Irrigation Authority (NIA).

Inaasahan ding dadalo sa pagdining ang mga opisyal mula sa Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources, at Public Works and Highways, National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), at ng Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI), at Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (MWSI).

Sinabi pa ni Arroyo na kabilang sa mga tatalakayin ang panukalang pagtatatag ng Department of Water, na "will be evaluated by the committee for the next Congress to act upon", ayon kay Arroyo.

Charissa Luci-Atienza



Krisis sa tubig sasalatin ng Kamara

NAKATAKDANG mag-sagawa ng imbestigasyon ang Kamara ngayong Martes hinggil sa krisis sa tubig.

Itinulak ni House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ang imbestigasyon bunsod ng kalbaryong dinaranas ngayon ng milyong milyong pamilya dahil sa patuloy na pagbaba ng water level sa Angat Dam, ang pangunahing pinagkukunan ng tubig sa Metro Manila at Central Luzon.

Inimbitahang dumalo sa hearing ngayong Martes ang mga opisyal ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems, National Water Resources Bureau, National Irrigation Authority, Local

Water Utilities Administration, Department of Agriculture, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Public Works and Highways at National Economic and Development Authority.

Ipinatawag din sa pagdinig ang dalawang concessionaire na Maynilad Water Services, Inc. at Manila Water Company, Inc.

Nitong Sabado lamang, sinimulan na ng Manila Water ang 12 hanggang 17 oras na arawang water interruption matapos na pumasok sa critical level ang tubig sa Angat Dam.

Isa sa hangarin ng

imbestigasyon ng Kamara ay upang makuha ang pulso sa panukalang pagbuo ng Department of Water.

Ngunit ayon kay Quezon City Rep. Winston Castelo, chair ng House committee on Metro Manila Development, ang unang dapat asikasuhin ay kung saan maaaring makakuha ng alternatibong tubig ang mga residente ng Metro Manila imbes na talakayin ang paglikha ng Department of Water.

"Yung Department of Water, I think, is not a priority if the intention is to create more water right now. It would come siguro at a later time," paliwanag niya.



Angat Dam level could further drop this week

ANGAT DAM'S water level could breach its lowest level recorded at 157.57 meters this week.

"If the situation in Angat watershed and dams, as far as rainfall is concerned, does not improve then it is possible," National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Seville D. David, Jr., told *BusinessWorld* in a text message when asked about the possibility of such a situation to occur.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has already declared the start of the rainy season, but the dam's water level continues to go down.

The weather bureau noted in its website that as of 6 a.m. on Sunday, the water level in Angat was at 159.43 meters, 50.57 meters below its normal high water level of 210 meters.

Water elevation at Angat Dam last dropped below the critical level of 160 meters on July 13, 2010 when it registered a low of 157.57 meters, as the El Niño phenomenon affected the country.

WATER SUPPLY

As for the water allocation to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), Mr. David said 36 cubic meter per second (CMS) will be maintained for the rest of June.

Discussions will be held next week if this will be further reduced in July depending on the dam's water level and climate projections.

The NWRB reduced water allocation during this month from 46 CMS to 40 CMS and further to 36 CMS.

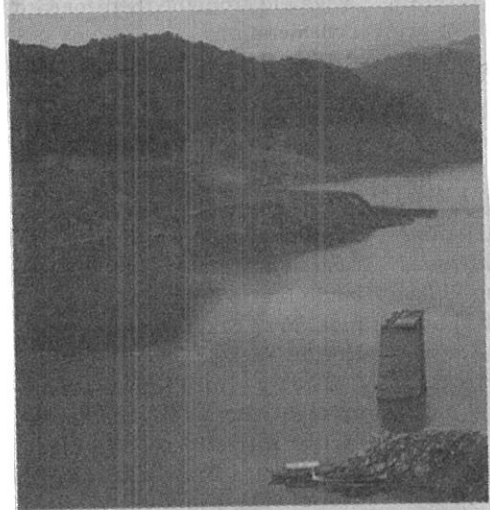
"We appeal to everyone to help us also through responsible use of water and conserve water. Let's also try to collect rain water and recycle it to help in the limited supply that we have now from the dam," he said.

With this development, water concession holders in Metro Manila and surrounding areas said they will have to wait for further actions from the NWRB before they can determine how much longer the ongoing water interruptions would be.

Maynilad Water Services, Inc. Spokesperson Jennifer C. Rufo said in a text message, "We are spreading out that limited supply so that all customers will receive some water even within a few hours daily. The interruption schedules we implement will greatly depend on the allocation that NWRB will give to the MWSS."

"Interruption hours could extend if less supply is given. Most affected in the West Zone are the highly elevated portions, and those that are farthest from the source, like Cavite," she added.

For Manila Water Co., Inc., Group Head for Corporate Strategic Affairs Nestor Jeric T. Sevilla Jr. said in a separate text message, "We are already implementing longer hours of water interruption as Angat has already breached its critical level. Further longer hours of interruption will be dependent on NWRB if it will further reduce the current 36 CMS allocation to the concessionaires. The entire East Zone is affected with highly elevated areas and those located far from our pumping and booster stations heavily affected." — **Vincent Mariel P. Galang**



BW FILE PHOTO

WATER elevation at Angat Dam last dropped below the critical level of 160 meters on July 13, 2010 when it registered a low of 157.57 meters.



Angat Dam water level goes south

BY VICTOR REYES

WATER level at Angat Dam in Bulacan, the source of 96 percent of Metro Manila's water, further dipped to 159.43 meters yesterday morning, causing severe water service interruptions in Metro Manila and nearby areas.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said the water level, already critical, was .35 meters less than its 159.78 meters status on Saturday.

The dam's minimum operating level is 180 meters that was breached last April 20 due to El Niño phenomenon.

Angat Dam registered its lowest water level in July 2010, hitting 157.56 meters during a similar drought problem. Authorities were also forced to resort to rotational water service interruptions.

If Angat Dam's water level reduces by an average of .35 meters in the coming days, it will break the lowest mark of 157.43 on Saturday.

The two water concessionaires – Manila Water and Maynilad Water Services – expanded water service interruptions last Saturday

ANGAT

after the National Water Resources Board reduced water allocation to 36 cubic meters per second, from 40 cms.

The NWRB is the government agency that manages water re-

sources in the country. The NWRB assured the 36 cms supply to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and the water concessionaires "until (Angat) dam further declines to 150 meters, assuming that there is no significant inflow."

Manila Water on Saturday said the water service interruptions are being implemented "to equitably distribute the limited supply to all customers so that they will have at least several hours of water coming from their taps during the day to allow them to store water."

Angat nears

SERVICE

record low

BY DIVINA NOVA JOY DELA CRUZ

THE water level at Angat Dam, the primary source of water for Metro Manila and nearby provinces, could be headed for a new record low after it breached the 160-meter critical mark on Saturday.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) recorded a 0.35-meter drop to 159.43 meters on Sunday, extending continued declines despite the onset of the rainy season.

While still a little under 2 meters below the all-time low of 157.56 meters hit during a 2010 El Niño event, Pagasa hydrologist Jason Bausa noted that rains expected over the next few days would likely not

►LowA2

■ LOW FROM A1

Angat nears record low

be enough for a recovery.

"May mga pag-ulan naman po kaya lang hindi bumabagsak sa kanyang reservoir kaya hindi siya nadadagdagan... hindi sapat kaya bumaba pa rin nang husto (There are rains but these are not falling in the reservoir, which is why the water level isn't rising... it's not enough and that's why the level continues to drop," Bausa said.

A low-pressure area that entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility on Sunday is also not expected to make landfall even if it strengthens into a typhoon.

Angat needs at least 638 millimeters of rainfall per day to stay at its normal operating level of 180 meters.

The decline, Bausa pointed out, continues despite a fresh cut to Metro Manila's water allocation. Still, the National Water

Resources Board's (NWRB) move to reduce the flow to 36 cubic meters per second (cms) from 40 cms likely helped ease the situation, as Sunday's 0.35-meter drop was down from the previous day's 0.50 meters.

"Siguro po nakatulong 'yung pagbawas ng allocation sa pagbaba ng reduction ng daily deviation... sa water level (The water allocation cut may have helped the reduction in the water level's daily deviation)," he explained.

Bausa said based on historical data, Angat's water levels normally only rise in July, following sufficient rains due to the southwest monsoon or typhoons.

"Kung wala pa ring pag-ulan, mga five to seven days, mabe-break niya 'yung record na historical low (If there are still no rains, the historical low could be broken in five to seven days)," he added, basing

this on an estimated average daily drop of 0.40 meters.

Increased consumption had also not helped, the Pagasa hydrologist said.

"Sa difference ng annual daily reduction, makikita mo 'yung trend niya from previous years, 'yung slant, halos pare-pareho. Tapos nitong 2019, lumaki 'yung slant niya eh, siguro 'yung demand nga... mataas (Based on the difference in annual daily reduction, the slant has remained almost the same in previous years. In 2019, the slant is bigger, maybe because of higher demand)" Bausa said.

This highlighted the need for additional sources of water, he added, such as a new reservoir or seawater desalination facilities that could help augment Metro Manila's supply.

Concessionaires Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. have implemented daily service interruptions, ranging from 7 up to 18 hours,

following the latest allocation reduction.

The House of Representatives is set to hold a hearing on Tuesday, June 25, to probe the water shortage.

Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo called an oversight investigation after meeting with officials of the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), who sought long-term and immediate solutions to the water problem.

Invited to the hearing were officials of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems, NWRB, LWUA, National Irrigation Authority, National Economic and Development Authority, Manila Water Company Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. The Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources, and Public Works and Highways will also be invited.

Also to be tackled is the proposal to create a Department of Water.

WITH GLEE JALEA



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Angat level falls anew

By Jennie Bonajos

From the 159.78-meter mark on Saturday, the water level at Angat Dam supplying Metro Manila further went down on Sunday below the critical level to 159.43 meters.

The reading was taken by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) at 6 a.m., with the dam's critical level being at 160 meters.

Although PAGASA already announced the start of the rainy season, the amount of rainfall so far has not been enough to raise water level at Angat and other dams like Lamesa.

Lack of rains over watershed blamed.

PAGASA explained that the absence of rain over the Angat watershed constitutes a shift between weather systems, resulting in short breaks of no rainfall for several days or weeks.

Water services in Manila were limited after the National Water Resources Board reduced water allocations for concessionaires.

Angat Dam supplies more than 90 percent of Metro Manila's water.



SGMA to look into impending water shortage

By **RYAN PONCE PACPACO**

ON her last week as Speaker, former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will conduct an oversight hearing to look into the impending water shortage as Angat Dam in Bulacan reaches critical level.

Arroyo made the call after the impending water shortage was brought to her attention by Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) Acting Administrator Jeci Lopus as he sought for solutions to the Angat water problem as well as long-term measures to prevent a water crisis from happening.

According to reports over the weekend, Angat Dam, which supplies water to Metro Manila and Central Luzon, may hit critical level in one or two days. As a result, allocation for Metro Manila's water supply may be reduced if the dam hits the 160-meter critical level.

Angat Dam has dipped to the 160.73-meter mark as of 6 a.m. last Friday according to PAGASA.

Invited to the hearing tomorrow at the House of Representatives are officials from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems (MWSS), National Water Resources Bureau (NWRB), LWUA, National Irrigation Authority (NIA), Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources and Public Works and Highways, NEDA, water concessionaires Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI), and the Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (MWSI), among others.

Aside from the water shortage, included in the



Macapagal-Arroyo

agenda is the proposed creation of a Department of Water which will be evaluated by the committee for the next Congress to act upon.

Last March, at the height of the water crisis in the east side of Metro Manila, Arroyo also conducted an oversight hearing to help find solutions to the problem.

As a result, Maynilad agreed to open five of its surplus valves with Manila Water to supply 50 million of water to ease the burden of the estimated 1.2 million households in the area.

Two House resolutions, both principally authored by Speaker Arroyo, were also adopted that tackled the water crisis in Metro Manila.

House Resolution (HR) 2547 strongly urged the MWSS, together with other concerned agencies and companies, to be proactive whenever an impending crisis is detected and immediately form a technical working group (TWG) to enhance and execute mitigation strategies to avert the occurrence of water shortage in Metro Manila and provide sustainable supply of clean and safe water for its citizens now and in the future.



Water crisis prompts Arroyo to convene oversight panel

By Rio N. Araja and Maricel V. Cruz

THE water elevation at the Angat Dam in Bulacan plunged below its critical level of 160 meters over the weekend, raising the likelihood of more water service interruptions in Metro Manila.

The dam's level fell to 159.43 meters against Saturday's level of 159.78 meters, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said Sunday.

On Saturday, the National Water Resources Board reduced the water allocation for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and its two water concessionaires—the Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc.—by four cubic meters per second from 40 CMS to 36 CMS.

"The additional four CMS reduction translates to a deficiency of 350 million liters per day equivalent to the daily water consumption of almost 700,000 people," Manila Water said.

"Manila Water is therefore constrained to [put into] effect a new scheme or rotational water service interruptions for the entire east zone at an average of 12 to 17 hours per day," it added.

Maynilad said starting June 22, it was "constrained to to implement new rotational water service interruptions" through its concession area in Metro Manila's west zone.

With barely a week before the end of the 17th Congress, House Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was set to conduct an oversight committee hearing to look into the country's water crisis. *Next page*

Tuesday, at 10 a.m.

Apart from the discussion on measures to address water shortage, the speaker would also take up the creation of a Department of Water.

In March, the House of Representatives launched an oversight hearing on the water crisis affecting the east zone of Metro Manila.

Earlier, LWUA acting administrator Jeci Lapus urged Congress to help find long-term solutions for Angat Dam's dwindling supply of water.

Arroyo said the 17th Congress could pass on to the next Congress the proposal for creating a Department of Water.

She summoned officials of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, National Water Resources Board, Local Water Utility Administration; National Irrigation Authority; National Economic and Development Authority; departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Environment and Natural Resources, Public Works and Highways, and the two private water concessionaires to appear before the oversight panel on June 25,



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Weather disturbance may bring rains over Angat watershed

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The rain-parched Angat watershed may experience a respite as the effect of habagat over parts of the country

could re-intensify by Wednesday, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) weather specialist Gener Quitlong said. ▶9

Weather disturbance may... ◀1

He said there is a possibility that the low-pressure area (LPA) east of the country, which entered the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) late Saturday evening, may enhance the effect of southwest monsoon or habagat that could bring scattered monsoon rains over the western sections of Luzon and Visayas, including Metro Manila by Wednesday. The LPA, last spotted 625 kilometers (km) northeast of Guiuan, Eastern Samar, or 680 km east of Virac, Catanduanes around 3 p.m. Sunday, may develop into tropical depression "Dodong" in the next two to three days.

Quitlong said Central Luzon, including Bulacan where Angat Dam is located, could possibly experience light to moderate monsoon rains to at times

heavy rains during thunderstorms.

Water level at Angat Dam dwindled below its 160-meter critical level last Saturday. It further decreased Sunday morning to 159.43 meters, from last Saturday's 159.78 meters.

Earlier, the National Water Resources Board said that heavy rains over the watershed area could help normalize the level of Angat Dam. Its normal high water level is at 210 meters.

Should the LPA develop into a tropical depression, it is less likely to make landfall over any part of the country as of the moment, Quitlong said.

"It will just brush past the Pacific Ocean, only moving close to Bicol Region and eastern Luzon," he added.

This Monday, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque,

Palawan, Romblon, Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Sorsogon, Masbate, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Misamis Oriental, Misamis Occidental, Bukidnon, Camiguin, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, and Zamboanga Sibugay, and Visayas will have cloudy skies with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms due to the trough or advancing clouds of the LPA.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will continue to experience warm and humid mornings and isolated rain showers in the afternoon or evening.

PAGASA warned that rains, especially during severe thunderstorms, could trigger possible flash floods or landslides over low-lying and mountainous areas in the entire archipelago.



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BELOW THE LINE

Water, miracles, and man-made solutions



By JOSÉ ABETO ZAIDE

POWER, man can create. But water (like mercy), “drop-peth like the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath.” (Portia, Shakespeare’s “Merchant of Venice”)

Manila Bulletin headlined last Tuesday, “Public urged to conserve water” and sub-titled with the text, “Angat Dam nears 160-meter critical mark level.”

PAGASA announced the official onset of rainy season; but admitted “insignificant” rainfall the past weeks. Angat Dam’s ideal water level is 180 meters (with 160 meters as critical water level for domestic supply); but our water level already lost another 17.61 meters. NWBRD Executive Director Seville David Jr. said that Angat Dam is already well below its 160-meter benchmark. The last time this was breached was in July, 2010, when it dipped to 157.57, the lowest in history.

Angat Dam supplies 96% of Metro Manila’s needs. The water level in Angat is expected to normalize with the southwest monsoon (habagat) in the period between July and September.

We had light rains in May and June; but we would welcome torrents and even a strong monsoon. We have to save together or parch together. We instituted water restrictions and 11-hour water service daily in certain areas. Residents are advised: No car wash; minimize flushing of W/C; no running water when brushing teeth; and *Dehin goli* or share water during bath showers (more fun). In US cities which are more accustomed to communal action, no car wash during water shortage.

To combat water scarcity, we have blueprints approved. But these will take four to six years. As I write, I hear the short burst of thunder, flashes of lightning and torrents of pouring rain. Instead of despairing

of man’s resolve, we look at Situation Impossible, But Not Hopeless (as in the Monty Python film). There is an alternative – prayers. Our most common recourse is the authorized prayer *Oratio Imperata Ad Fluviam Petendam*, which petitions for rain in times of severe drought. Impossible situations make our populace more religious and God-fearing.

Editorial

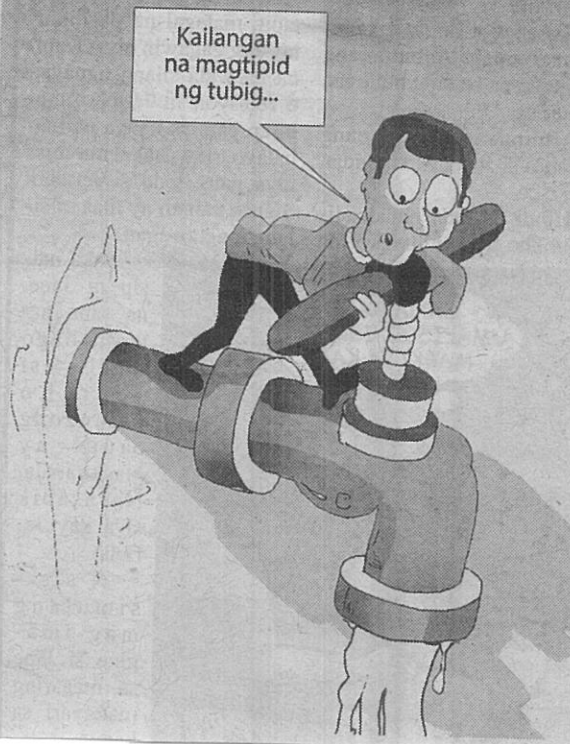
Tipirin ang tubig

NASA kritikal na level na ang tubig sa Angat Dam. Patuloy na nababawasan kahit na dineklara ng PAGASA na panahon na ng tag-ulan. Bagama't umuulan sa dakong hapon at gabi, hindi pa rin ito sapat para madagdagan ang tubig sa mga dam na nagsusuplay sa Metro Manila. Noong Sabado, umabot na sa 159.78 meters ang level ng tubig sa Angat Dam at sabi ng PAGASA, maaaring bumaba pa.

Dahil nasa kritikal na level, magpapatupad ang Manila Water ng 12 hanggang 17 oras na water interruption sa kanilang consumers sa East Zone. Ayon sa Manila Water, ito lamang ang paraan para maipamahagi ang tubig. Apektado rin ang mga consumers ng Maynilad sa nasabing pagbaba ng level ng tubig sa Angat Dam. Nabawasan din ang alokasyon nila kaya magpapatupad din ng water interruption.

Nananawagan ang pamahalaan sa mamamayan na magtipid sa tubig. Maghinay-hinay sa paggamit sapagkat maaaring maranasan ng mga taga-Metro

Larry Goy '19
6.24.19



Manila ang kakapusan ng tubig na nangyari noong 2010 na sumadsad din ang level ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

Paalala ng pamahalaan na huwag mag-aksaya. Limitahan ang paggamit gaya nang paghuhugas sa mga sasakyan. I-recycle ang pinaghugasan sa mga plato at ito ang ipangbuhos sa inidoro o ipandilig sa mga tanim. Kaunting panahon na lang naman daw ang ipagtitiis dahil parating na ang ulan o mga bagyo.

Nararapat talagang maghinay-hinay sa paggamit ng tubig ngayon. Pero mas mainam kung ang pagtitipid sa tubig ay pangungunahan mismo ng mga taga-gobyerno. Mag-umpisa sa mga tanggapan ng pamahalaan. Maraming tanggapan na nag-aaksaya sa tubig. Pawang may leak ang mga tubo sa comfort room, maluluwag ang gripo sa mga lababo kaya walang tigil nang pagtulo, ang mga flush ng inidoro ay walang tigil sa pag-agos na parang balon. May mga comfort room na ang nakasahod na drum ay umaapaw sa tubig at tumatapon lamang.

Magkaroon din naman ng igting ang Maynilad at Manila Water sa pagkukumpuni ng mga tubo na nagtatapon nang maraming tubig. Maraming tubo ang may leak at tila swimming pool ang kalsada at natatapon ang tubig.

Magpakita ng halimbawa ang mga nakatataas at susunod ang mamamayan. Kailangang manguna ang pamahalaan lalo na sa nangyayaring krisis sa tubig.



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METRO

Truck too heavy for Manila road

An overloaded truck sank into the ground at Roxas Boulevard and Remedios Street in Manila after part of the road collapsed under its weight on Sunday. The Department of Public Works and Highways said the truck and its cargo weighed 42 tons while the road could carry only 20 tons. The portion that collapsed was built over a box culvert, which serves as one of the city's main drainage systems.

—STORY BY AIE BALAGTAS SEE AND TINA G. SANTOS **A15**



WEIGHT PROBLEM People work together to remove a truck carrying sand from a hole on Roxas Boulevard corner Remedios Street in Manila on Sunday morning. —MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

Overloaded truck causes part of road to collapse

DPWH says affected pavement built over Manila's biggest drainage system

By Aie Balagtas See
@ABSeeINQ

A dump truck transporting sand for the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay sank into the ground after a portion of the road collapsed underneath the vehicle's weight on Sunday.

The incident happened around 1:30 a.m. on the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard corner Remedios Street in Manila.

Mikunug Macud, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) district engineer in the city, said the 14-wheeler driven by Michael Lagco weighed about 42 tons.

However, Remedios Street, a secondary road, could only accommodate 20 tons.

"The contractor [truck owner] committed a lot of violations. Two of them were exceeding weight or load limit, and passing through a secondary road when

they know trucks are not supposed to be there," Macud said in a phone interview.

He added: "It doesn't mean that you can go scot-free when you're working for the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay, right?" On the front of the truck was a sign saying "Manila Bay Task Force."

DPWH investigation

In a statement, the DPWH said it would conduct a probe of the incident to determine the cause and possible liabilities of the people who own the truck.

According to Macud, the portion of the road that collapsed was the part built over a double barrel box culvert, which served as one of the city's main drainage systems.

He declined to give an estimate of the cost of damage, saying he would leave it to DPWH structural engineers.

The DPWH said the double barrel box culvert on Remedios Street was constructed in the 1970s.

Macud, who has been with the DPWH south Manila since 1981, said that portion of the road had never been repaired.

Based on his initial assessment, the drainage itself was not damaged, only its cover.

At the time of the incident, the road was closed to give way to a fun run.

But Macud said it was not clear why the truck driver passed through that side of the road when they were allowed on the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard.

"He could have just simply asked the police to let him pass," he added.

DPWH assistant district engineer Ernesto Leones called the area a "drainage main." Both he and Macud denied ear-

lier reports that the collapse was caused by a sink hole or soil erosion.

No sink hole, soil erosion

"No, no. There's no such thing," Leones said in a separate phone interview, adding: "That's the biggest drainage system discharging water to Manila Bay. That's why there's water underneath."

Felix Abad, head of the Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, earlier said that there was plenty of water under the pavement.

In an interview, Abad said that based on what he saw, what happened was a form of "soil erosion." "The sea eroded the earth" was how he described it.

Macud said they would file charges against the contractor. —WITH A REPORT FROM TINA G. SANTOS INQ



No sinkhole on Roxas Boulevard - officials

By **ERMA R. EDERA**
and **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

A 14-wheel truck loaded with tons of sand fell into a five-foot deep hole at the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Remedios Street in Manila before dawn Sunday. ▶9

No sinkhole on...

But what was initially described as a "sinkhole" turns out to be drainage way that collapsed under the weight of the truck.

According to Michael Lagco, the driver of the truck bearing "Manila Bay Task Force" mark, they came from Pampanga and were heading to the Manila Baywalk to deliver tons of sand for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project when they suddenly fell into the hole at around 1 a.m. on June 23. Lagco and his two passengers escaped unhurt.

Lagco said they were supposed to pass through Roxas Boulevard's main road, but traffic enforcers directed them to take the service road to give way for the Manila Marathon 2019 event. It was in the area where the accident happened.

The corner of Remedios Street corner Roxas Boulevard was temporarily closed to traffic as authorities were still finding ways to extricate the truck out of the hole.

Secretary Mark Villar said the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is currently investigating the

incident. He said that the double-barrel box culvert on Remedios Street was constructed in the 1970s.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Jonas Leones said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) will be sending personnel on Monday to check on the situation.

"Per our chief of Geological Division, he has also no idea of the sinkhole but he suspects it might be a result of some construction works failure or collapse of drainage ways," Leones said.

Meanwhile, Science and Technology Undersecretary Renato Solidum said the hole is essentially a drainage canal, whose concrete cover collapsed due to the weight of the truck that passed over it.

"Not really a real sinkhole," he added.

Arnel Isanan, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) sector commander for Roxas Boulevard, said on Sunday morning that it would take some time to remove the truck from the hole.



Truck proves too heavy for Roxas Boulevard

By EDU PUNAY

A portion of Roxas Boulevard in Manila collapsed as a 14-wheeler-truck exceeding the road's weight capacity passed by early yesterday.

The truck loaded with sand fell on its side, creating a sink-hole during the incident near the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Remedios street at around 1 a.m.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said it would investigate the incident to determine the cause of the incident and possible liabilities of the truck driver.

DPWH district engineer Minkunug Makud noted that the truck exceeded the maximum weight capacity of the portion of Roxas Boulevard that was

built for drainage and flood control.

Makud explained that the road has a weight capacity of 20 tons. The truck, he said, was loaded with almost 40 tons of sand.

The DPWH official also said the truck fell in the drainage, where there is no support in the ground.

In a statement, the DPWH said the double barrel box culvert along Remedios street was constructed in the 1970s and is not part of the Build, Build, Build Project of the Duterte administration.

Makud said the driver of the truck, Michael Lagco, could be held accountable for the damage incurred.

When interviewed by traffic

enforcers, Lagco said they came from Pampanga headed for Manila Baywalk to deliver the sand for the Manila Bay rehabilitation when the incident happened.

He said they were supposed to pass through Roxas Boulevard but traffic enforcers directed them to take the service road to give way for a marathon event along the boulevard yesterday.

Lagco and his two passengers did not sustain any injuries.

As of noon yesterday, a portion of Remedios street at the corner of M.H. Del Pilar was still closed to traffic as a clearing operation was ongoing. — With Marc Jayson Cayabyab



Sinkhole? Not really – just a drainage box destroyed by an overloaded truck carrying Pampanga sand bound for Manila Bay's beach.

BOB DUNGO JR.

MANILA BAY REHAB

Frolicking on Pampanga sand?

Overloaded truck sinks into destroyed drainage box

by Pat C. Santos

Tons upon tons of sand from the province of Pampanga are being trucked to Metro Manila in line with the rehabilitation of Manila Bay being spearheaded by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources.

This came to the fore after a 14-wheeler truck's tail-end fell into a drainage box at around 1 a.m. yesterday along Remedios Street corner Roxas Boulevard.

District Engineer Mikunug Makud of the Department of Public Works and Highways said the collapsed drainage has load capacity of only 20 tons, way below the 40 tons of sand reportedly carried by

the truck.

Another report said the truck was carrying only 16 tons of sand but that along with the vehicle's weight should still exceed the 20-ton load bearing capacity of the drainage.

Makud said the driver Michael Lagco will account for the damages due to overloading, but Lagco said he was only following instructions from traffic enforcers to use the service road to give way to a Sunday morning marathon event.

Not injured

Lagco and two helpers did not sustain injuries. The front portion of the truck has a tarpaulin which read "Manila Bay

Task Force."

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, through Roxas Boulevard sector commander Arnel Isanan, said it will take awhile to remove the bogged down truck. The MMDA deployed a crane to remove it.

"As of now, we are still looking into the possibility if the hole will grow wider and deeper. (It's) around four to five deep now but first, we will start to unload the sand from the truck," Isanan said.

The MMDA closed the affected portion of Remedios Street corner Del Pilar and issued an advisory of expected heavy traffic in the area so motorists could take alternative routes.

The claim of the driver that the tons of sand were supposed to be used for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay raised questions as to whether they are being used to top off the Manila Bay beach after the removal of debris.

Helpless

While authorities still prohibit any beach activity at Manila Bay, they had been mostly helpless in stopping people frolicking in the sand and swimming in the still polluted bay water.

Aside from the Manila Bay rehabilitation, several rehabilitation projects in the area are already in the pipeline with a total of 21,000 hectares to be reclaimed.

Culvert box only has capacity of 20 tons, says DPWH.

Sand and rock are used in reclamation projects worldwide, especially in such Asian countries as Singapore, Hong Kong, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Brunei and Malaysia, according to one of the biggest sand-shipping company in the country.

"The proven use of sand for reclamation projects... has inspired local real estate developers in partnership with foreign investors to venture into a massive 21,000 hectares reclamation projects in Manila bay," said the company.

Reclamation projects

Among the projects are the Manila Water Front City project by Waterfront Manila Premier Development Inc., with 318 hectares; Horizon Manila J. Bros Construction Corp. with 419; and Manila Bay International Community

UAA Kinming Group Development Corp. 407.

Also lined-up are the Solar City Manila; Bay Manila Goldcoast Development Corp., project, 148; expansion of Manila Harbour by R-II Builders, 50; Pasa; Harbour Consortium/ Udena Dev. Corp. & China Harbour Engineering Company Limited, 265; SM Group Reclamation SV Group; 660; Pinas-Paranaque Coastal Bay Project, 635; Sangley Point Reclamator (Global Gateway) All Asia Resources Corp. & Belle Corp. 2,500; Coastal Development Consortium (Manila-Bataan) San Miguel Holdings and New San Jose Builders, 5,565.

"Given the substantial requirement of sand to be used in the 21,000 hectares reclamation projects in Manila Bay, Minda Global Trading Corporation is currently sourcing a huge volume of the reclamation sand from the rivers and catchment areas of Mount Pinatubo," said the sand-shipping company.

"Since Mount Pinatubo ejected approximately 7.5 billion tons of volcanic sand in year 1991 it is more than enough for the estimated 1.2 billion metric tons of sand required for the 21,000 hectares of reclamation projects in Manila Bay," it said.



Editorial **EDITORIAL** *Editorial*

Rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay, lalong tumatagal dahil sa mga pasaway!

PATULOY ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay. Kaya lang, lalo itong tumatagal dahil sa mga pasaway na patuloy nagtatapon ng basura sa mga ilog na bumabagsak sa Manila Bay at mga establisimyento na hindi sumusunod sa mga patakaran para maiwasan ang polusyon.

Kaugnay nito, nagbigay-babala ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa mga establisimyento na hindi lamang ipasasara kundi full shutdown ang kanilang operasyon.

Ayon sa ahensiya, ang pagpapatupad ng batas ay laban sa mga establisimyento na dahilan ng polusyon sa Manila Bay.

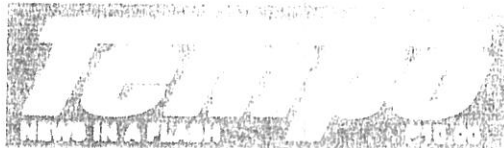
Ang business permit ng umano'y polluting establishments ay pansamantalang sususpendihin hangga't hindi nakasusunod sa Clean Water Act at lahat ng Environmental Laws.

Samantala, nabigyan na umano ng sapat na panahon ang mga establisimyento para sumunod sa itinakdang mga batas.

Una rito, ilang establisimyento ang tinawag na 'Manila Bay polluters' at pinatawan ng cease and desist order ng Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

Kung patuloy na susuway ang mga establisimyento sa mga patakaran itinakda para maiwasan ang polusyon, mahihirapan ang pamahalaan na matapos agad ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Ika nga nila, may kabayaran ang pagsuway sa batas kaya para sa mga owner ng establisimyento, huwag maging pasaway!



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Truck falls into

By ERMA EDERA

A 14-wheel truck loaded with 16 tons of sand collapsed under its own weight and fell into an alleged five-foot deep "sinkhole" in Manila before dawn yesterday.

Michael Lagco, truck driver, said they were on their way to Baywalk in Manila from Pampanga to deliver tons of sand for the Manila Bay rehabilitation when the road beneath them collapsed and suddenly fell into the sinkhole on Remedios St. corner Roxas Boulevard in Malate at around 1 a.m.

Lagco said they were supposed to pass through Roxas Boulevard but traffic enforcers directed them to take the service road instead to give way to the Manila Marathon 2019 event.

The front of the truck had a tarpaulin which had "Manila Bay Task Force."

Lagco and his two passengers did not sustain any injuries.

Arnel Isanan, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority sector commander of Roxas Boulevard, said it would take some time to remove the truck. Isanan said the truck fell into a

huge drainage canal which had no support.

Two lanes of Remedios St. were affected by the incident.

"As of now, we are still looking into the possibility if the hole will grow wider and deeper. Around four to five deep siyangayon but first, we will start to unload the sand first from the truck," he said.

The MMDA and Department of Public Works and Highways have installed orange barriers in the area. Cracks were also visible on the road.

Remedios St. corner Roxas Boulevard was temporarily

'sinkhole' in Manila

closed to motorists as authorities were still finding ways to pull out the truck from the sinkhole.

"Temporary road closure at Roxas Blvd. Rajah Sulayman NB due to stalled truck as of 11:30 a.m. Expect heavy traffic on this area. Take alternate route," MMDA said in an advisory.

The sinkhole could just be a drainage construction failure, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Jonas Leones said yesterday.

"Per our chief of Geological Division, he has also no idea of

the sinkhole but he suspects it might be a result of some construction works failure or collapse of drainage ways," Leones said.

He said the DENR Mines and Geosciences Bureau will send personnel today to check the sinkhole.

Science and Technology Undersecretary Renato Solidum said the sinkhole is essentially a drainage canal, whose concrete cover collapsed due to the weight of the truck that passed over it. "Not really a real sinkhole," he added. **(with a report from Ellalyn V. Ruiz)**



DPWH hugas-kamay sa sinkhole

NALAGLAG sa isang malaking sink hole, ang isang 14-wheeler truck na may lulang tone-toneladang buhangin na ideliver sana sa Manila Bay, kahapon nang madaling araw sa bahagi ng Roxas Boulevard sa Malate, Maynila.

Nabatid sa report ng Manila Police District (MPD), pasado ala-una nang madaling-araw nang maganap ang insidente sa Roxas Boulevard, kanto ng Remedios Street sa Malate.

Galing umano sa Pampanga ang trak, na minamaneho ni Michael Lagco at may tatak na Manila Bay Task Force na papunta sana sa Manila Bay rehabilitation project upang ideliber ang mga buhangin nang bigla na lang itong mahulog sa isang sinkhole sa lugar.

Hindi naman nasugatan si Lagco at kanyang dalawang helper, at wala ring mga motorista o tao sa lugar na nada-

may sa pangyayari.

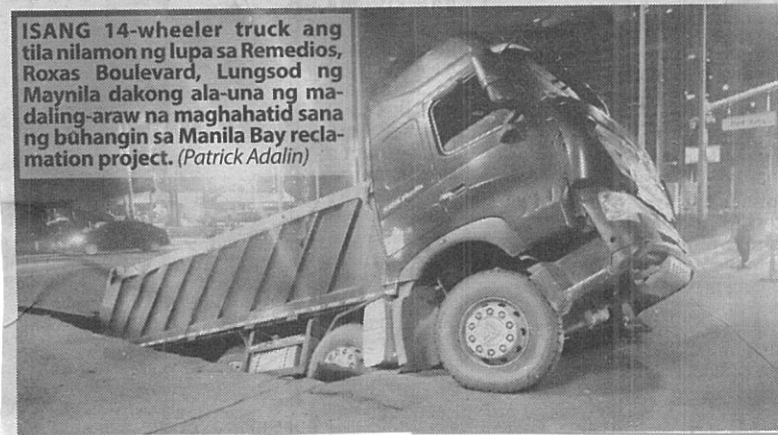
"Buti at sa likod nahulog kung sa harap malamang patay na kami," ayon kay Lagco.

Nalaman na daraan sana sila sa Roxas Boulevard, pero dahil sa Manila Marathon 2019 event ay pinalipat sila ng traffic enforcers sa service road.

Samantala, sinabi naman ni Mikung Makud, District Engineer ng Department of Public Works and Highways na nasira ang drainage ng kalsada dahil ang kalye ay dinisenyo para sa mga sasakyan na may bigat lamang na hanggang 20 tonelada, pero ang trak at ang karga nito ay 40 tonelada na.

Sinabi ni Makud na sasampahan nila ng overloading at sisingilin pa ng danyos sa nasirang kalsada ang driver. **(Juliet de Loza-Cudia/Mia Billones)**

ISANG 14-wheeler truck ang tila nilamon ng lupa sa Remedios, Roxas Boulevard, Lungsod ng Maynila dakong ala-una ng madaling-araw na maghahatid sana ng buhangin sa Manila Bay reclamation project. (Patrick Adalin)





Manila Zoo, gagawing educational park

Plano ni incoming Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso na pagandahin pa at gawing Botanical Zoo ang Manila Zoo.

Ayon kay Moreno, wala siyang plano ng tanggalin ang Manila Zoo upang gawing mall o casino.

Sa halip, plano niyang dagdagan pa ito at lalong pagandahin, hindi lang upang maging pasyalan, kundi para mas maging kapaki-pakinabang sa mga mag-aaral.

"Andun pa rin 'yung mga hayup, pero dadagdagan ko. 'Yung something na puwedeng mapag-aralan ng mga estudyante para maging mas kapaki-pakinabang," pahayag ni Moreno.

"Nakakasawa naman kasi kung elepante na lang 'yung makikita mo lagi. Kailangan meron bago, plants, birds, flowers," sabi pa ng bagong alkalde ng Maynila.

Sa Hulyo 1 sisimulan ni Moreno ang pormal na panunungkulan bilang alkalde ng Maynila.

Mary Ann Santiago



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EDITORIAL



CARTOON

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LAND DEVELOPMENT TUTUTUKAN NI ISKO

HINDI umano prayoridad ni Manila Mayor elect Francisco "Isko" Moreno Domagoso ang reklamasyon ng Manila Bay area na nasa hurisdiksyon ng Lungsod ng Maynila sa halip ay mas gusto niya na tutukan ang land development sa lungsod.

"Reclamation is not my priority. We will focus on land development. Meron na kami dyan, payayabun- ngin na lang" ayon kay Moreno.

"One thing is for sure, while we are making manila vibrant, may oras din for peace and order. We will respect human rights on both sides, enforcers and suspects. It goes for everybody. May pagpapahalaga sa buhay" dagdag pa ni Moreno.

Ayon kay Moreno, mas gusto niya na pagtuunan muna ng pansin ang peace and order ng Maynila.

Magugunita na noong bumisita siya kay dating Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim ay humingi siya ng payo kung papaano mapapanatili ang peace and order sa Maynila.

Nalaman na sa administrasyon ni Manila Outgoing Mayor Joseph Estrada ay isinusulong nito ang multi bilyon reclamation area sa Manila Bay. (Andi Garcia)



Boracay bridge OPS to be awarded soon – DPWH

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

The awarding of the original proponent status (OPS) for the bridge that would connect Malay, Aklan to Boracay island can be expected soon, according to Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar.

"We're still finalizing the OPS. We're still processing," Villar told reporters on the sidelines of the ocular inspection of the first segment of the

C5 Southlink project.

San Miguel Corp., through its infrastructure arm San Miguel Holdings Corp., earlier submitted an unsolicited proposal for the P5.48 billion Boracay bridge project.

The DPWH earlier affirmed that the company submitted the complete proposal of the project in January.

Villar said once the project receives the OPS from the DPWH, it will be submitted to the National Economic

and Development Authority (NEDA) for evaluation.

While Villar expects the granting of OPS by the DPWH soon, he declined to give a target for when the project will get approved by the NEDA.

"Well for the NEDA, I can't preempt them because they have their own processes," Villar said.

Once approved by the NEDA, the unsolicited proposal will undergo a Swiss

challenge in which other companies are invited to submit counterproposals to that of the proponent. The OPS holder will decide to match these counterproposals to retain control of the project.

SMC's proposal is a 1.2-kilometer limited-access bridge infrastructure between Boracay Island and the main island of Panay (Malay, Aklan).

"The bridge is not envi-

sioned to cater to vehicular through-traffic, so as not to congest the island, but will be provided with loading/unloading areas on both ends to process the movement of commuters, solid waste, goods and supplies," the DPWH said.

Last year, Boracay island, the country's flagship tourist destination, was closed from tourists for six months to pave way for its rehabilitation after it was plagued by

environmental issues.

Boracay soft opened on Oct. 26 and now follows a carrying capacity to ensure the sustainability of the island.

A study commissioned by the DENR showed that Boracay's carrying capacity is only 55,757 people per day, including its residents. Only 19,215 tourists are allowed to be on the island at a certain time, with 6,405 tourists allowed to enter the island per day.



₱5.5-B Boracay bridge proposal seen approved

By LORENZ S. MARASIGAN

[@lorenzmarasigan](#)

DIVERSIFIED conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMS) may soon receive the original proponent status (OPS) for its ₱5.5-billion Boracay Bridge unsolicited proposal, a Cabinet official said.

Public Works Secretary Mark A. Villar said his office is about to finish the evaluation of the proposal of the listed food-to-infrastructure firm and all indications point at a positive result. "We will soon issue a decision on the OPS. We are still finalizing it," he said in a chance interview.

Through San Miguel Holdings Corp. (SMHC), the company proposed to build a 1.2-kilometer

limited-access bridge between Boracay Island and Panay. When completed, the facility will serve as an all-weather access for vehicles and pedestrians going to and from the premier tourist destination.

Currently, boat services connect Boracay and Panay. The bridge, however, will not cater to vehicular through-traffic, but will provide loading and unloading areas to facilitate the movement of commuters, solid waste, goods and supplies.

"After we've granted it, we will then submit the project to the National Economic and Development Authority [Neda]. It will evaluate the merit of the project," Villar said.

When asked if the government can launch the Swiss Challenge for

the proposal within the year, Villar said: "It depends on the Neda. I cannot preempt the Neda. They may have questions. Once they are done with the evaluation, then we can have clearer idea as to our targets."

Unsolicited proposals, under the law, are required to undergo a competitive challenge, wherein other groups that may be interested in the same project may offer a better deal to the government. The original proponent will have the chance to submit a counteroffer to subsequently win the project. The Boracay Bridge aims to "free up Boracay Island from pressures due to overcrowding and overuse of existing facilities, which ultimately produces adverse environmental impact."

The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Bulacan journalists 'harassed' over trash issue

A GROUP of Bulacan-based journalists keeping track of a looming garbage crisis in Bulacan for a month are now being intimidated and believed to be harassed by an armed man in civilian clothes after covering the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) inspection of and water sampling in a private sanitary landfill in Norzagaray town on Friday.

Frederick Silverio, a correspondent of *The Manila Times* and current president of Bulacan Press Club, condemned the incident as a direct harassment of the media and curtailment of press freedom.

Silverio raised concern why an armed civilian continues to roam Bulacan despite a series of anti-crime operations led by the provincial police.

Saying they monitor the presence of armed men in the City of San Juan del Monte who appear to be members of paramilitary or private armed groups, he called on Philippine National Police chief Oscar Albayalde to go after these men.

In an Incident Report Form

submitted on Sunday to Presidential Task Force on Media Security, Carmela Reyes-Estrope, correspondent of *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* and publisher of local Bulacan weekly newspaper *News Core* detailed how an armed man in civilian clothes and on board a motorcycle intimidated her, Silverio and three other media practitioners.

In a police report before the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) Bulacan office on Saturday, Estrope also made the same detailed report that she was with Silverio, El-oisa Silverio, correspondent of *Diaryo Bomba/Saksi Ngayon* and IOorbit News online, Louie Angeles of radio dwIZ and Isagani Navarro, cameraman of GMA-7, and stringer Rommel Ramos were all on board a light gray Mitsubishi Adventure, a service vehicle of the Provincial Public Affairs Office (PPAO) of the Bulacan provincial government when the unidentified man flagged them down around 3 p.m. along Igay Road in Ba-

rangay Paradise 3.

They had just covered the water sampling done by the DENR on the leachete of Wacuman sanitary landfill in San Mateo, Norzagaray, and were already heading back to the Bulacan provincial capitol when the incident happened.

Federico Rivas, driver of the vehicle and assigned to the PPAO's Office, pulled over.

Angeles, seated on the front passenger seat, then rolled down the window and asked why they were stopped.

The heavily-built man in civilian clothes, wearing a faded fatigue short pants and a white shirt and a jacket and with dark complexion, then asked if they were companions of Bulacan provincial engineer Glen Reyes, who was also with the group of concerned government agencies that conducted the inspection and water sampling activity, Estrope said.

The unidentified armed man was asking for the mobile number of the provincial engineer

when radio reporter Louie Angeles noticed that the man had a gun that was partly hidden by his jacket.

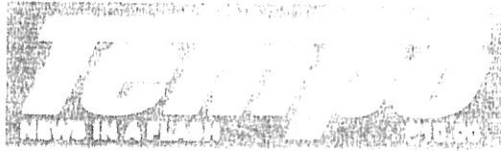
Adhering to protocol, nobody gave the mobile phone number of the provincial engineer.

The Bulacan-based reporters said even if the armed man just asked for Reyes' mobile phone number, they felt that they were harassed and even feared the way they were flagged down.

All the five mediamen who were all tired, soaked, wet and their bodies filled with mud going down and up mountainous sites in Sitio Tiakad to reach the Kabubuaya upstream and midstream rivers for the water sampling were so eager to go back to Malolos City and failed to record or take pictures of the armed man.

Ramon Lazaro of the *Philippine Star* and Shane Frias Velasco of the Philippine Information Agency were with other staff of PPAO in another vehicle but they were not flagged down by the armed man.

FREDERICK SILVERIO



This is On Me

Floro Mercene

Planting taklobo to clean the ocean

GIANT clams, also known as taklobo in Filipino, used to be "killer clams" since they were once thought to bite divers' limbs off. In truth, they can only gently grip a diver's limb when

they slowly close their shells as a defensive reaction. The taklobo were once common in coral reef areas, but during the 1980s they were collected by coastal communities for food or to sell their

shells. Now these gentle giants are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Flora and Fauna, to make sure that international trade will not threaten the species.

The taklobo eat by sucking in water and filtering it for nutrients in their bodies. This helps clean the water around them, making them important for a healthy marine ecosystem.

Bolinao, Pangasinan is an example of a province that is reintro-

ducing giant clams to their waters. The shallow coast of Silaqui Island is where numerous clams are now being released. In partnership with the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, the giant clams are grown in tanks at the Bolinao Marine Laboratory (BML) until they're 5 centimeters wide. After this, they're moved to an ocean nursery until they grow too big to be eaten by their predators. At this age, they can be brought to their new homes.

One of the biggest challenges

is that there is not enough funding the personnel. It takes a lot of people to clean and bring the clams to the nursery. Because they lack funding, the clams tend to be left to fend for themselves.

Bolinao is fast becoming known by tourists for their taklobo. Other provinces, such as Anilao and Davao also get their clams from the BML in hopes of restocking these in their coasts. Hopefully, this will save the species from extinction while helping keep their coasts clean.

ASEAN, GERMANY CONCLUDE COOPERATION PROJECT ON ECON DEVELOPMENT, BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION



AFTER four years of implementation, the Asean-German Cooperation Project, "Biodiversity-based Products (BBP) as an Economic Source for the Improvement of Livelihoods and Biodiversity Protection," celebrated its success in a recent regional project closing event in the Lao PDR ancient capital of Luang Prabang.

The BBP Project was funded by the German government through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, and implemented by the GFA Consulting Group and the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

It piloted biodiversity-based product development in three Asean member-states (AMS) for the improvement of the livelihood of local communities living around protected areas, while at the same time ensuring that biodiversity is better protected.

Hosted by the government of Laos, the event brought together the stakeholders from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, who have been part of the project since its inception in 2015.

Guests from other AMS were invited to participate in the discussions based on the stories shared by representatives from government offices, small-scale businesses and villages from the different pilot sites.

The event served as a venue for the officials from the ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Forestry, Trade, Science and Technology; national park management, private-sector partners; research and members of the village groups to exchange on further cooperation for the promotion of biodiversity-based products in Asean.

Souksamone Pathammavong, deputy director general of Planning and Cooperation of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Laos, opened the event.

Clarissa C. Arida, director of the Programme Development and Implementation Unit of the ACB, delivered the opening message on behalf of ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim.

"Harnessing the potentials and benefits of products from natural resources through sustainable means is key to achieving the global goal of sustainable development, which encompasses three important dimensions: environmental, economic and social aspects," Lim said in her message.

"In the Asean, we acknowledge the vital role and potential of biodiversity for socio-economic development. We also recognize the important role of the private sector and local communities in conserving biodiversity and enhancing livelihood opportunities for a better quality of life," she added.

"In all these pilot initiatives, a functioning ecosystem is a key to exploring sustainable economic opportunities. Adding value to a product and, at the same time, maintaining the value of nature is crucial to enhancing competitiveness from farm to markets. The ACB joins hands with GIZ and GFA in recognizing the milestones of the BBP project at the conclusion of this cooperation

project," Lim said in her message.

Khamlay Sipaseuth, director of the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office Luang Namtha of Laos, and Dr. Dicky Simorangkir, program director of GIZ, also delivered their opening messages. The latter also gave a presentation on the overview of the GIZ program, including the BBP component.

Bianca Schlegel, project manager from GFA Consulting Group, provided a brief introduction to what biodiversity-based products are, and on value chains.

Value chain experiences and lessons learned on developing the black ginger, vine, bamboo, local herbs, honey and medicinal bath herbs product value chains were presented by Bopreang Ken, deputy director of the Department of Biodiversity General Secretariat for the National Council for Sustainable Development in the Ministry of Environment of Cambodia;

Oukeo Xayatham, deputy head of the Nam Ha National Protected Area of Laos; Pham Van Nam, vice director of Ba Be National Park of Vietnam; Tam Thanh Nguyen, deputy head of Financial Planning of Hoang Lien National Park in Vietnam; and Nguyen Van Hieu, director of



Geoinformatics Research Center Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry in Vietnam.

Christian Elloran, database specialist from the Biodiversity Information Management Unit of the ACB, gave an overview of the BBP Project's web platform and its contents, and shared its use to the AMS.

On the other hand, Elpidio Peria, program specialist from the Programme Development and Implementation Unit of ACB, provided a presentation, titled "The Mainstreaming of Biodiversity across Sectors through Promotion of Biodiversity Value Chains." He discussed the different ways on how mainstreaming of biodiversity-based products into policy can be achieved, and how the ACB support the AMS in these actions.

Other highlights of the project closing event included an exhibition area where the BBP Project stakeholders were able to showcase and sell their products.

It also launched the BBP Project Video, which featured the stories of villagers from all the pilot sites in the three AMS, as well as messages from officials from the relevant government organizations.



THE global tourism industry, especially ecotourism, rely directly on biological diversity for sustenance.

Biodiversity mainstreaming makes good business sense

The Philippines has one of the most amazing biodiverse environment in the world, and the richness and uniqueness of its ecosystem needs to be protected because it is key to the survival and growth of businesses and industries, according to an environmental expert.

Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director at the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), said enterprises should start mainstreaming biodiversity into their operations rather than just make it a part of their corporate social responsibility activities.

Mainstreaming biodiversity requires embedding biodiversity considerations into the policy, strategy and practice of businesses so that biodiversity is conserved and sustainably used, explained Lim, who spoke at a recent environment forum organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

She said practicing environmental conservation and biodiversity mainstreaming makes good business sense because "nature provides business with the fundamental components for long-term profit and survival."

Lim said many industries are

directly reliant on biological diversity for sustenance. The global multibillion-dollar tourism industry, including ecotourism, is among them. In the Philippines the development of this sector is assured only if biodiversity is sustained and preserved.

Lim noted how the Philippines is part of the Coral Triangle, often referred to as the Amazon of the Ocean, which contains 75 percent of the world's reef-building corals.

She added that a large percentage of all species in the world can only be found in the Philippines. For instance, 45 percent of birds are found only in the country, 59 percent of mammals, 60 percent of flora, 77 percent of reptiles, and 81 percent of amphibians.

But other sectors are also connected to biodiversity because nature provides the "ecosystem services" they need. These include provisioning services, such as how forests provide bignay, a wild fruit used to make wine; raw materials for clothing like the bakong fibers; and water. As an example, Lim said wild fruits abound in the Philippines.

Purchase of an endangered species

Dear PAO,
I am a collector of different kinds of animals. Will I violate any law should I purchase a fish classified as an endangered species?

Greggy

Dear Greggy,
The law that addresses your situation is Section 102 of Republic Act 10654 or the "Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998:"

"Section 102. Fishing or Taking of Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species. — (a) It shall be unlawful to fish or take, catch, gather, sell, purchase, possess, transport, export, forward or ship out aquatic species listed in Appendix 1 of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, or those categorized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources as threatened and determined by the Department as such."

Relatedly, the same law provides a penalty for violation of the same viz:

"Upon a summary finding of administrative liability, the Department shall penalize the offender with a fine equivalent to five times the value of the species or five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00), whichever is higher, and forfeiture of the species.



DEAR PAO

**PERSIDA
ACOSTA**

"Upon conviction by a court of law, the offender shall be punished by imprisonment of 12 years and one day to 20 years and a fine equivalent to twice the administrative fine, forfeiture of the species and the cancellation of fishing permit."

It is clear from the cited provision that purchase of a fish classified as an endangered species is illegal and may subject the offender to a penalty of fine or imprisonment, depending on the discretion of the court. Thus, you may be held liable should you proceed to purchase the fish.

This opinion is solely based on the facts you have narrated and our appreciation of the same. The opinion may vary when the facts are changed or further elaborated. We hope that we were able to enlighten you on the matter.

Editor's note: Dear PAO is a daily column of the Public Attorney's Office. Questions for Chief Acosta may be sent to dearpao@manilatimes.net

Mangroves, reefs reduce losses from disasters – UN

THE Philippines was able to save more than \$1 billion in losses because of its natural systems, according to a World Bank report.

In its Lifelines: The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity report released last week, the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) noted that “combining infrastructure with nature-based solutions” reduces countries investment needs.

“In the Philippines, mangroves, reefs and other natural system prevent more than \$1 billion in annual disaster losses,” the report said.

The report also noted that nature-based solutions were also used for flood protection, thus, reducing the need for hard infrastructure like dikes.

“The fact that mangroves and coral reefs protect coastlines against floods and storm stages is

well-known,” the report said.

It added that countries that benefited the most from reefs were the Philippines, Cuba, Indonesia, Malaysia and Mexico.

The report said the annual expected flood savings of these countries was estimated at more than \$400 million each.

World Bank and GFDRR’s report said the net benefit on average of investing in more resilient infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries would be \$4.2 trillion.

“Resilient infrastructure is not about roads or bridges or power plants alone. It is about the people, the households and the communities for whom this quality infrastructure is a lifeline to better education and better livelihoods,” World Bank Group President David Malpass said in a statement.

ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES



EDC joins global effort to save threatened tree species

RENEWABLE energy leader and geothermal producer, Energy Development Corp. (EDC) was tapped as the first and only local partner for Global Tree Assessment program (GTA).

The Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the world's largest plant conservation network, and the secretariat of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) made the significant move.

IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it, such as data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy and education.

Through GTA, BGCI aims to come up with the world's first global list of tree species and their conservation assessments by 2020.

According to BGCI, only 25,000 of the world's 80,000 tree species have been assessed globally or nationally for their risk of extinction. Through EDC's Binhi corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, BGCI will be able to obtain information on 800 Philippine endemic tree species.

Binhi is EDC's flagship environmental program since 2011 that has successfully reforested 9,500 hectares with indigenous species, and has also succeeded in searching, sampling and propagating 96 premium native tree species under threat of extinction.

Most recently, as part of Binhi's aim to upgrade the conservation status of 35 species, EDC submitted data on five endemic *Xanthostemon* species to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), as

well as to the IUCN, which paved the way for the partnership.

Under the partnership, EDC will receive a grant of £16,160 or more than P1 million over a two-year period.

BGCI will also train the Binhi team, its partner organizations and the DENR on the IUCN Red List methodology, a vigorous and internationally respected procedure following strict guidelines and data requirements on extinction risk assessments.

"We want to enhance and harness the Philippines's expertise and share it with the world. Hopefully, the Red List Assessments we're producing for the Philippines will enable us to do that, to share what you're learning in the Philippines with the world through our networks," said visiting BGCI conservation specialist Megan Barstow.

For EDC, the partnership boosts ongoing efforts to protect the environment, promote sustainable progress and address an unprecedented pace of species extinction.

"This partnership with the IUCN and BGCI could not have come at a more opportune time. We welcome the privilege—albeit the daunting task of being the Philippines's first and only assessor of 800 native trees species," said EDC Chairman and Chief Executive Federico Lopez.

"The engagement can only take EDC's biodiversity conversation programs several steps further as we learn best practices in proper global tree assessment and link up with BGCI's network and other botanic gardens all over the world," Lopez said.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
TEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

PEOPLES JOURNAL

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Garbage trucks from MM, Bulacan, P'panga nowhere to go

WHILE the transport of garbage from some parts of Metro Manila, and from most of Bulacan, and Pampanga to the Waste Custodial Management (Wacuman) garbage dumpsite in San Jose Del Monte City (SJDM), Bulacan has long been going on despite continuing protest among the affected residents, it has captured the limelight because of the current garbage crisis in SJDM City.

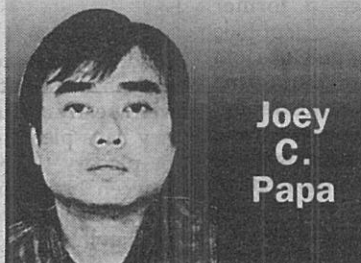
The road going to the "sanitary" landfill or glorified garbage dumpsite is under repair, so the garbage trucks cannot proceed to the garbage dumpsite. Photos from news reports show rows of the garbage bags that could not reach their destination lining the street.

Matagal nang tinututulan ng mga residente ang pagtatapon ng mga basura sa kanilang barangay. May tatlong barangay ang dinadaan ng mga trak ng basura bago ito dumating sa tambakan ng basura ng Wacuman na diumano'y ginagamit ang lupang pag-aari ng Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Noong nakaraan taon taon ay nagrali ang mga resident ng tatlong barangay ng SJDM upang pagilan ang pagpasok ng mga trak ng basura. "Mabaho at nagkakalat ng basura sa aming mga kalsada ang mga trak na ito," sabi ng mga residente.

Matagal na ring alam ng mga naupo, umupo, at uupo, sa lokal na pamahalaan ng SJDM at ng buong lalawigan ng Bulacan, ang isyung ito ng Central Bank of the Philippines at Wacuman.

Ang deklarasyon ng mga environmental groups ay isang watershed ang lugar ito na ginawang tambakan ng basura. Mainam ding imbestigahan kung may paglabag sa mga batas pangkalikasan ang tambakan ng

BANGON KALIKASAN



Joey C. Papa

basurang ito.

Nakita ko ang lugar na ito maraming taon na ang nakararaan. Napakaganda ng kabundukang ito. Nang magpunta ako kasama ang ilang opisyal ng Ecowaste Coalition, sinabi sa amin ng tagapamahala ng umaangkin ng lugar na sa kanila ang lupang kabundukan, na wala raw silbi ang lugar kaya mas mainam na gawin na lang itong tambakan ng basura.

Ang lupang kabundukan ay may hugis na parang kawa o malaking kawali, Palalim ang hugis ng bundok na napaliligiran ng maraming matataas na puno. Kulay luntian ang kapaligiran at malamig ang simoy ng hangin. Pinatag na ang bundok at ginawang tambakan ng basura. Ano'ng paglabag ang naganap sa mga environmental laws? Makabubuting siyasatin ito.

Ipinaliwanag namin sa tagpamahala na ang lupang bundok ay watershed at may katabi pa itong mababang ilog na tumutuloy sa Manila Bay. Hindi sumang-ayon ang lalaking tagapamahala na umano'y tauhan ng alkalde ng katabing bayan ng SJDM at kapatid ng mga noo'y kon-

sehal ng SJDM. Napaulat sa media na kinuha ng New People's Army (NPA) sa bahay ang tagapamahala at binaril sa isang sunugan ng goma ng gulong na malapit din sa ginawang tambakan ng basura.

Ang kasalanan ng tagapamahala umano'y pinatay nito ang isang matandang babaeng residente ng komunidad katabi ng tambakan ng basura at isang residenteng babaeng na kanya namang ginahasa. Ang kuwento ng mga tagaroon ay mismong ang ginahasa niyang babae ang bumaril sa kanya na sumapi sa NPA nang hindi siya makakuha ng katarungan mula sa pamahalaan.

Marami pang kuwento hinggil sa napakagandang lugar na ito na ginawang negosyo. Ang malungkot, bakit dito rin nagtatapon ng kanilang mga basura ang Pampanga, Metro Manila at Bulacan?

Hindi ba't may batas, ang RA 9003, na nagsasabing ang pamamahalang maka-kalikasan ay dapat gawin sa mga barangay at hindi gawing tambakan ng basura ang ibang lugar? Kung sino ang lumikha ng basura, sila ang dapat mamahala! Hindi dapat naghahanap ng ibang bakuran para tapunan ng nilikha nilang basura.

These local government officials never learn, or refuse to do so. Why? I heard that President Duterte is dismayed about the continuing garbage issue in Metro Manila and nearby provinces and he would want this mess to be fixed or he would do something about it.

Mr. Duterte ordered the clean-up of Boracay and Manila Bay rehabilitation. Will he order the the same for the garbage mess in SJDM and nearby provinces?

(bangonkalikasan@yahoo.com)t



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ASEAN tumodo sa anti-plastic campaign

NAGDEKLARA ng gi-yera ang mga lider ng Association of South-east Asian Nations laban sa marine debris.

Nabatid na nakiisa sa giyera laban sa marine debris si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na dumalo sa ika 24th ASEAN Summit sa Bangkok, Thailand.

Sa inilabas na joint statement sa ilalim ng Bangkok Declaration on Combatting Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, nagkaisa si Duterte at iba ASEAN Leader na palakasin ang aksiyon hanggang sa national level para maalis sa karagatan ang marine debris partikular sa land base activities.

Nauna rito ay nagpahayag ng pagkabahala ang mga lider dahil sa mabilis na pagtaas ng marine debris, gaya ng mga plastic na basura na may negatibo ng epekto sa marine biodiversity, ecosystems, animal well-being, fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism, local societies at economies.

Magkakaroon rin ng inter-sectoral coordination ang mga ASEAN leader para epektibong matugunan ang pinanggagalingan ng marine debris pollution.

Napag-alamang hilingin rin ang tulong ng pribadong sektor sa pamamagitan ng pagpapatupad ng joint actions at partnerships.

Kabilang na sa mga inisyatibo na posibleng ipatupad ay ang pagbawas ng paggamit ng plastic at pag-recycle sa mga plastics. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia)



Southeast Asian nations, among worst ocean polluters, aim to curb plastic debris

BANGKOK. – Thai zero-waste advocate Thanaboon Somboon never leaves his home without what he calls a full “weaponry” of reusable shopping bags, coffee tumblers and stainless steel straws for his daily battle against single-use plastic.

“I saw news of trash overflowing the world ... sea animals dying from eating plastic ... I felt I must do something,” says the 48-year-old entrepreneur, who leads an online community of more than 20,000 people seeking to practice a waste-free lifestyle.

But individual efforts alone can't fully stop the 8 million tons of plastic that make their way to the ocean each year, and with four of the five worst ocean polluters in Southeast Asia, the region's governments must take action, he says.

“Policymaking to address the issue must be treated with urgency as well,” said Thanaboon.

A summit for leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) being hosted by Thailand this weekend is expected to adopt the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region.

Thailand, the current chair of the group, has lauded the declaration as a “big step” for the region, whose coasts have seen whales and sea turtles wash up dead in recent years with large amounts of plastic

rubbish in their stomachs.

ASEAN members Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand are among the five countries throwing the most plastic waste into oceans, according to a 2015 report co-authored by environmental campaigner Ocean Conservancy.

China is the worst offender.

“Every ASEAN country agrees that marine debris is a common problem that we must address urgently,” Wijarn Simachaya, permanent secretary of Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, told Reuters.

Unlike the European Union's central bans and targets, Wijarn said the ASEAN declaration will outline broad ideas but it will be up to each country what it would take home to implement.

The declaration will come ahead of next week's G20 summit in Japan, which assembles 20 major economies and will also aim to tackle marine plastic pollution.

WORDS ON PAPER?

Environmentalists welcomed ASEAN's move to adopt the joint declaration, but there are worries that implementation will be a challenge, because the group has a code of non-interference that would leave necessary policymaking in the hands of individual member countries.

“This declaration will be a new milestone, but it will be just words on paper if there is no change in policies,” Tara Buakamsri, director of Greenpeace Thailand, told Reuters.

He said ASEAN countries should urgently all ban single-use plastic first for the declaration to be effective. “There is no other way,” Tara said.

Globally, up to 5 trillion single-use plastic bags are used each year, according to the United Nations Environment Programme. Of 300 million tons of plastic waste the world produces annually, 8 million end up in the oceans, killing marine life and entering the human food chain, it says.

According to Ocean Conservancy, 60 percent of the debris comes from China and the four ASEAN nations.

“It's a good step as this is the first time ASEAN formally acknowledges the issue of marine debris,” said marine biologist Thon Thamrongnawasawat.

Each year, Thailand generates about 2 million tonnes of plastic waste, only about 25% of which gets recycled. The rest goes to incineration or landfill, where about 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes leaks into the ocean.

Environmentalists commend initiatives by some major retailers to cut back on plastic bags, but say most businesses will not take

action unless there is a stricter push from policy initiatives.

CP All, which operates over 10,000 7-Eleven convenience stores across the country, said it has saved 464 million bags from circulation since December, donating more than 92 million baht saved from the process to public hospitals around the country.

Thailand's largest retail conglomerate Central Group said last month it aimed to reduce plastic bags by 150 million this year by giving customers rewards incentives.

Governments should “act more drastically” by introducing immediate bans on single-use plastic so that more businesses follow suit, said Nattapong Nithi-Uthai, who leads volunteer network Trash Hero that cleans up the Gulf of Thailand in southern Pattani province.

He also said ASEAN should aim to significantly improve its waste management schemes, as well as hold producers of consumer goods accountable.

“There should be designated places for every single item to go. If things are piled up somewhere, they can leak into the ocean,” he said.

“Producers should also be made responsible for taking back the single-use plastic they produce ... This might make them think twice about producing single-use packaging.” – Reuters

500MW energy service contract faces scrapping

KIBUNGAN, Benguet: A local renewable energy corporation petitioned the Department of Energy (DoE) to cancel a renewable energy service contract that it issued to the controversial Coheco Badeo Corp. (CBC), proponent of the 500-megawatt pump storage hydro power plant in Barangay Badeo.

On Oct. 31, 2013, the Energy department issued to the Cordillera Hydroelectric Power Corp. (Coheco) a renewable energy service contract, which provided that "the renewable energy developer is appointed as the party with the exclusive right to explore, develop and utilize the hydro power resources within the

contract area."

Petitioner Coheco alleged that the service contract issued to CBC overlapped the earlier one it issued based on recent findings by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

In his letter to DoE Luzon field office director Reynaldo Liganor, Jingboy Atonen, director of the Legal and Government Relations Office of Coheco, operator of the proposed 60-megawatt run-of-river mini-hydro power plant in Kapangan and Kibungan, recommended that the service contract to CBC be investigated since it overlaps the earlier service contract of Co-

heco, particularly its exclusive area of operations.

The petitioner also asked the DoE to impose appropriate administrative penalties, if warranted, or the outright cancellation of the service contract granted to CBC.

Atonen informed the DoE that CBC's application for special land use permit with the DENR also overlaps Coheco's approved forest land use agreement (FLAG).

Coheco also wrote a letter to the Benguet Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) that it is not amenable to any proposal for co-existence with CBC considering that CBC's

proposed project is fundamentally inimical to its 60-megawatt hydro project.

Coheco's lawyer said the service contract granted to CBC overlaps the area where most of Coheco's essential generation facilities are located.

Coheco's service contract defined its area located along the Amburayan river in Benguet and specifies the point of water diversion and the proposed location of the generation facilities.

It is now doing preparatory works for its proposed 60-megawatt mini-hydro project on the border of Kapangan and Kibungan towns. **DEXTER A. SEE**



PHL efforts to hit UN goals on education, climate change 'promising'—report

Yv

By CAI U. ORDINARIO

@caiordinario

THE country's chances of meeting the education and climate change-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are promising based on the findings of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) crafted by the government.

In the VNR, the Philippine Institute and Development Studies (PIDS) and National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), through the help of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Unescap), also found that efforts to achieve other goals show mixed progress.

"What we can only say is that overall education goal is promising, among the six goals [we included in the report]. Battling climate change was also promising given the country's disaster plans. But other goals especially on human rights show mixed progress," PIDS Senior Research Fellow Jose Ramon Albert told the BUSINESS-MIRROR over the weekend.

According to the report, achieving the targets is feasible due to the institutionalization of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) and the efforts of the Department of Education (DepEd) in reaching out to the private sector in terms of the "last mile."

Reaching out to the last mile means including out-of-school youth and other vulnerable groups in education services.

Based on the VNR, the Philip-

pinos improved from the baseline data on several indicators such as the elementary net enrollment rate to 94.2 percent in 2017 from the 91-percent baseline in 2015; completion rate, 92.4 percent from 84 percent; and cohort survival rate, 93.7 percent from 87.5 percent.

In the secondary level, improvements were seen in the net enrollment rate to 76 percent in 2017 from the 73.6 percent-baseline in 2015; completion rate, 84.3 percent from 74 percent; and 85.6 percent from 81.6 percent.

The report also noted that in terms of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), certification rate improved to 92.9 percent in 2017 from the 91.1-percent baseline.

However, dropouts or school leavers rate both in primary and secondary declined to 1.6 percent and 5.2 percent in 2017, respectively. The 2015 baseline dropouts or school leavers rate in primary and secondary was at 2.7 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively.

The VNR noted that data is not available in terms of tracking the proportion of children at the end of primary and secondary to achieve at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics.

Climate-change mitigation

IN terms of SDG 13 on climate action, the VNR showed that efforts such as the passage of the Climate Change Act of 2009 which created the Climate Change Commission (CCC), helped push for the achieve-



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ment of the goals.

This was followed by the passage of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 and the People's Survival Fund Act of 2013 which established a P2-billion fund to augment financial support for local adaptation projects.

Efforts to support climate action also included the establishment of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, which helped strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction nationwide.

The VNR noted that there is improved knowledge and awareness on low-emission development through the passage of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act of 2019; Green Building Code of 2016; and Green Jobs Act of 2016.

"The government, through Neda, is also developing a National Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production," the report noted.

Based on the VNR, only the indicator on the number of directly-affected persons attributed to disasters declined to 682,315 as of 2018 from the baseline of 846,651.

Data showed, however, that the number of deaths attributed to disasters per 100,000 increased to 352 in 2018, from the baseline of 116 in 2016. The same happened to the number of missing persons attributed to disasters per 100,000, which increased to 38 in 2018, from 29 in 2016.

The VNR stated that the latest data was not available for the proportion of local governments

that adopt and implement local disaster risk-reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk-reduction strategies.

Of the 17 regions, only Region 5 or the Bicol region does not have a baseline rate. But Regions 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) had a baseline rate of 100 percent.

The region which has the lowest proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk-reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk-reduction strategies was Region 6, or Western Visayas, at 25.1 percent.

"One hundred percent of the LGUs in nine of the 17 regions have incorporated risk-reduction strategies in their respective local plans; yet, LGU capacity to implement remains limited by financial constraints and technical expertise. Beyond funds, LGUs need knowledge in translating their risk-informed plans into implementable and bankable projects," the VNR stated.

Albert said efforts to monitor and meet the SDGs are "complicated." Based on the VNR, the midterm update of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) could see the addition of more targets in the SDGs that the country will have to meet by 2030.

This is because of the addition and changes in the indicators that have to be met nationally in relation to the global targets. Not all the global SDGs will have to be met given that some targets are not applicable to some countries.

The Manila Times

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Countries behind climate change should pay – Duterte

COUNTRIES that greatly contributed to climate change should be held liable for their actions, President Rodrigo Duterte said at the 34th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Bangkok, Thailand.

“The cost is horrendous, especially for us in Southeast Asia: Displacement, destruction and death. Real lives hang in the balance,” he said.

“We must hold countries most responsible for climate change to

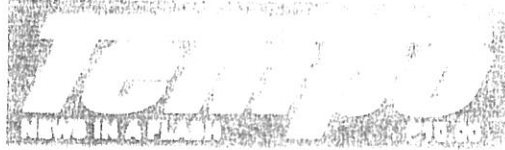
account, to answer,” he added, noting that natural disasters across the globe occur more frequently and with more intensity.

He said countries should adapt to climate change by building resilient infrastructure, sustainable

cities and innovative systems.

“We must adapt and build our resilience by advancing initiatives that care for the people and the environment,” the President continued.

RALPH U. VILLANUEVA



ASEAN agrees to share best practices on climate change

BANGKOK – The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is determined to strengthen efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change, including building climate-resilient communities, as well as address natural disasters in "timely and systematic manner."

The regional bloc, composed of 10 member-states, has agreed to share best practices to strengthen capacity on climate change mitigation and disaster preparedness during the plenary summit in Bangkok last Saturday.

In the Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability, ASEAN leaders have agreed "to strengthen ASEAN's capability and capacity to respond to the adverse effects of climate change."

They have committed to facilitate the sharing of information and best practices to enhance

the implementation of the Paris Agreement and Nationally Determined Contributions in order to build climate resilient communities in Southeast Asia.

The bloc also intends to advance ASEAN's concerns based on consensus on common interests on climate change through joint statements in the upcoming climate summits in New York City as well as Santiago, Chile.

On dealing with natural disasters, the ASEAN leaders have agreed to enhance the ASEAN capacity to address such challenge "in a timely and systematic manner." They cited the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response as the common platform for effective implementation of "One ASEAN One Response." **(Genelyn Kabiling)**



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Online Cabinet meeting eyed to ease traffic

By RICHMOND MERCURIO

President Duterte and his Cabinet are eyeing an online meeting – veering away from face-to-face meetings that are usually held on Mondays at Malacañang – if only to save themselves and other motorists from road traffic congestion.

Eliseo Rio, information and communications technology acting secretary, said the first-ever online Cabinet meeting might take place this year as part of efforts to help ease traffic.

“We are going to have the first teleconferencing Cabinet meeting within this year. This was in fact the idea of the President since he assumed the presidency, when he said he does not want his travels and that of the members of the Cabinet for meetings and attending events to contribute to the traffic problems in Metro Manila,” Rio told **The STAR**.

He added that the plan is to have a meeting “wherein no secretary will have to leave their office because, whenever there is an event in Malacañang and if

all of us will go there, that is one cause of traffic (congestion).”

A virtual Cabinet meeting would enable the likes of Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia to stay in their respective offices in Clark, Manila, Makati and Pasig while discussing various agenda and plans with Duterte at the Palace.

Rio said the plan has taken time to start because of the budget requirement and procurement process in coming up with a teleconferencing system.

“The system must cater to the needs of the Cabinet clusters and the teleconferencing capability of each department in the government to reach their respective regional offices. All local government units must also be able to access this government teleconferencing network,” he pointed out.

Once the system becomes operational in Metro Manila and other major cities, Rio said teleconferencing and telecom-

muting would greatly help in reducing the traffic problem in Metro Manila.

“Especially if the private sector will pitch in setting up virtual meetings when physical presence is not needed. Thus, by the end of the year, we, including the President, can virtually travel from Cubao to Makati in five minutes, the time to set up a teleconference meeting,” Rio added.

Duterte signed in December last year Republic Act 11165 or the Telecommuting Act.

The law allows an employee in the private sector to work from home or at an alternative workplace with the use of telecommunication or computer technologies. It aims to address traffic congestion and to promote a healthy work-life balance.

“How many small meetings are there in Metro Manila a day? That is roughly 20,000 and that involves about 50,000 cars or vehicles. If we can only eliminate that because we can do business transactions online or video conferencing, then we could ease traffic,” Rio said.



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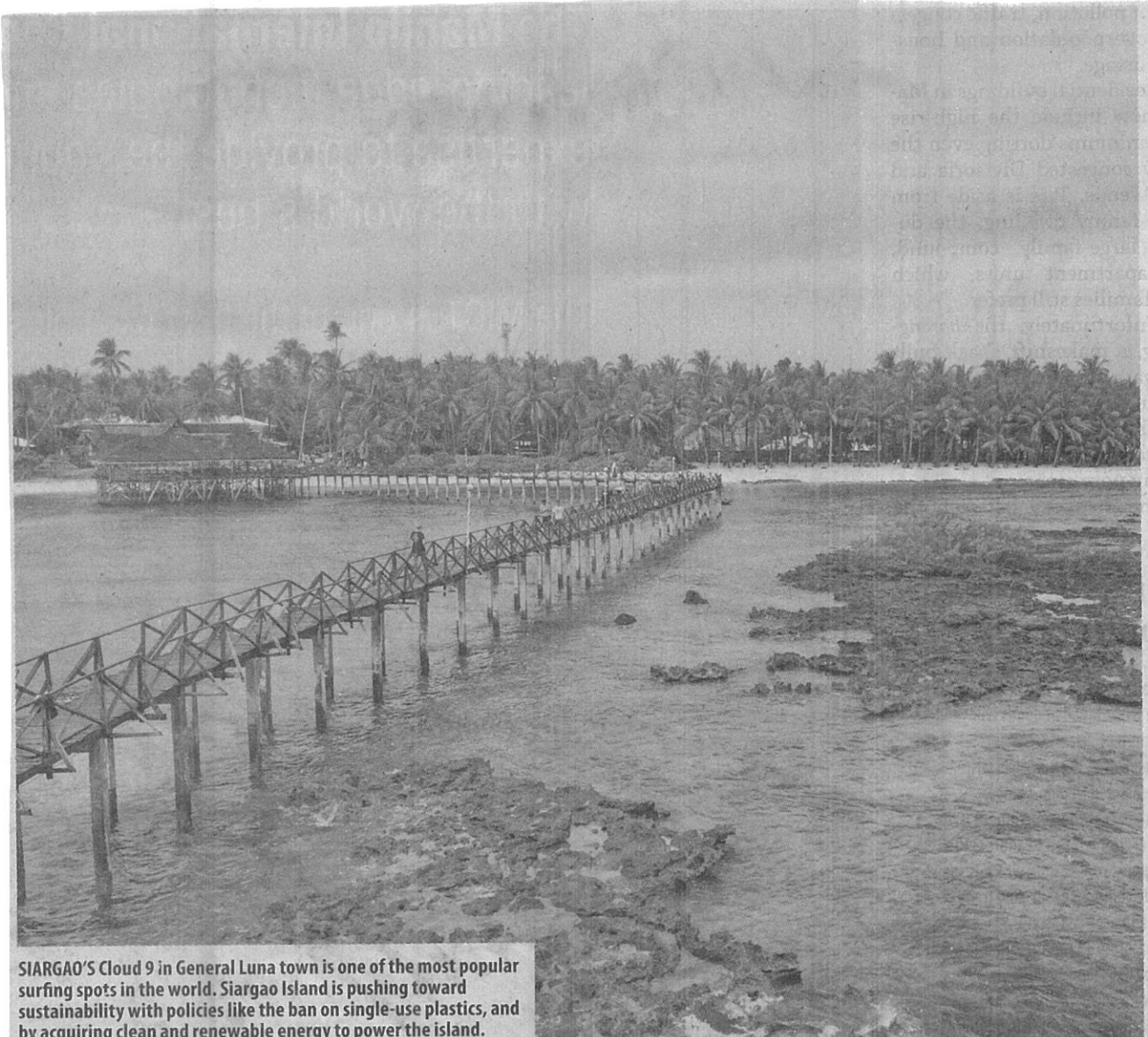
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SIARGAO'S Cloud 9 in General Luna town is one of the most popular surfing spots in the world. Siargao Island is pushing toward sustainability with policies like the ban on single-use plastics, and by acquiring clean and renewable energy to power the island.

Siargao Island gets greener

SIARGAO Island in Surigao del Norte has been known for its pristine white beaches, marine life, rich mangrove forests—and world-class surfing spots.

With tourist arrivals expected to hit around half a million in 2019, the island's leaders have started the path to sustainability.

In 2018, the municipality of Pilar passed an ordinance banning the use of single-use plastics—a pioneering move for the island whose biggest industry depends

on its rich natural resources.

The island's power distributor, Siargao Electric Cooperative (Siarelco), pushed the sustainability envelope even further. The island—rated one of the world's best in 2018 by prestigious travel magazine *Condé Nast Traveler*—is now mostly powered by clean and renewable energy.

"Siargao is one of the top tourist destinations. While we welcome more guests, local and foreign alike, we wanted to ensure that we continue to do our part

in taking care of our island," said Siarelco General Manager Sergio C. Dagooc.

Siarelco's demand for power has almost tripled in only three years to an estimated 8 megawatts to 9 MW this year. The majority of the island's power supply come from the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM), which is powered by the Agus-Pulangi hydropower complex and the Mount Apo geothermal power plants.



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When it had the opportunity to get power from private suppliers, it added at least 1 MW from AboitizPower's Hedcor hydropower plant in Bukidnon, under the company's Cleanergy brand.

"After the ban on single-use plastics on the island last year, led by our local government, we take pride in contributing our sustainability efforts for Siargao by adding more renewable energy to our energy supply mix," added Dagooc, an incoming congressman of the Party-list Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (Apec).

Siarelco entered into a renewable-energy supply contract with AboitizPower subsidiary Hedcor for 1 MW. The energy will come from the company's recently completed hydropower plant in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

"We are excited to be a partner of Siarelco in its efforts to make Siargao more sustainable. This partnership highlights the high value that both Siarelco and AboitizPower place on sustainability, driven by our shared commitment to bettering the communities we serve," said AboitizPower First Vice President Juan Alejandro Aboitiz for Energy Trading and Sales.

Aboitiz said an increasing number of distribution utilities and Open Access customers are seeing the opportunities brought by a push for sustainability.

Responding to this need is AboitizPower's brand Cleanergy, coming from the company's vast portfolio of geothermal, hydro and solar power plants located all over the country.

"With our portfolio and more than 50 years of experience in the energy sector, we are able to tailor fit solutions that will meet the demands of our customers," Aboitiz added.

Hedcor is a wholly owned subsidiary of AboitizPower that operates 21 run-of-river hydropower facilities across the country with a total installed capacity of 258 MW.



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by DANNY SIMON

UPPERCUT

dansiphus_10@yahoo.com

SEN. BONG GO ILIGTAS ANG PH SPORTS SA MGA BUWITRE

ONLI in da Pilipins! Saang sulok ng mundo ka makakakita na sobra ang politika at power play na hiindi pumipili ng oras at tiyempo keshodang makompromiso ang bansa sa kahihyan... dito lang sa bayan ni Juan.

Hindi ligtas ang larangan ng sports diyan.

Mantakin niyo, napasubo na ang Pilipinas para mag-host ng Southeast Asian Games kung saan at panahon ito ng pagkakaisa ng mga kinaaukulan at ng sambayanan.

Higit limang buwan na lang at lalarga na ang naturang biennial sports spectacle dito sa rehiyon ng Timog Silangang Asya pero watak pa rin ang mga sports leaders natin lalo na iyong mga utak-talangka na ang gusto at sila ang may timon kahit lihis sa batas ang kanilang adhikain.

Partikular sa POC na di na natapos ang intriga kahit malapit na ang SEAGames.

May mga ilang leaders na gustong sila ang mamahala ng hosting lalo na at nakaamoy sila ng bultong pondo na laan ng pamahalaan at mula pribadong sektor.

Nais nilang masolo ang malaking hiwa ng cake para sa pansarili bago ang bayan

Panahon na para putulin ni PDU30 ang sungay ng mga pasaway at kurap sa sports at wag hayaang mapahiya ang bansa dahil sa kanila.

Calling Sen. Bong Go.. iligtas ang Pinas sa mga buwitre sa sports... ABANGAN !

Lowcut - Pagpupugay sa isa sa pinaka-aktibo, masipag at maasahang lingkod-bayan sa administrasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na si DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda. Si Bo's Benny ang walang kaproble-problemang opisyal ng gobyerno kahit anong oras siya kapanayamin ay asahan mong pronto at komprehensibo ang lahat nang isasagot sa mga napapanahong isyung may kinalaman sa kanilang kagawaran at bayan kasi taga-media rin siya at alam niya at naitindihan ang propesyon kaya ayaw niyang maging prima-donna na opisyal at appointee. Sana ay pamarisan ka ng ALL PRESIDENT'S MEN. Usec. Benny.

By the way, ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources ay may idinaraos na 2019 Sportsfest tampok dito ang volleyball games na inorganisa ni Madam Emma kung saan ay kalahok ang mga koponang MGB, Calabarzon, PRRC, NWRB, BMB, OSEC, NCR, LMB, EMB-RAA, NAMRIA at EMB-Centri.

Greetings sa mga games officials na sina Chato Evangelista, Menchie Salazar, Justin Rayven Cruz, George Cordova, Joselito Rivera at Erika Dalan. GAME NA!!



PH, Indonesia sign maritime boundary pact

BANGKOK – The bond between the Philippines and Indonesia stays "strong and tight" following an agreement that sets maritime boundaries in their overlapping areas, a Filipino government official said yesterday.

The implementation of the landmark Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of Indonesia Concerning the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone Boundary was tackled during a meeting between President Duterte and Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Bangkok Saturday night.

The two leaders met behind closed doors to tackle issues and concerns, including economic and security cooperation, on the sidelines of the 34th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

"The Palace announces the completion of the Philippines' and Indonesia's respective domestic requirements which would lead into a landmark agreement concerning the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone boundary between the two countries," presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said.

"Both leaders see this development as a clear demonstration of the strong and tight bond between the Philippines and Indonesia, which incidentally are celebrating their 70th anniversary of formal diplomatic and bilateral relations," he said.

According to Panelo, the maritime boundary pact between the two nations could serve as a benchmark on how to peacefully resolve border disputes of countries.

He said the legal instrument would be "a good precedent" on how to address maritime concerns and settle disputes in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea "bearing in mind the archipelagic nature of the Philippines which inherently shares common borders with many ASEAN member-states."

"In line with the independent foreign policy course that PRRD charted for our country – where we are friends to all and enemies to none – we hope that this accord would serve as a benchmark for future agreements with other countries with shared or similar concerns as we continue to deepen cooperation with our strategic allies in the region," Panelo said.

The maritime boundary pact between the Philippines and Indonesia was signed back in 2014 following 20 years of negotiations. It sought to clarify an equitable delimitation of their overlapping exclusive economic zone in the Mindanao Sea and the Celebes Sea.

Apart from the maritime boundary pact, Duterte and Widodo also tackled trade concerns as well as peace and security issues during their bilateral meeting. **(Genalyn Kabling)**



THAILAND'S Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha gestures during a press conference at the end of the 34th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Bangkok on 23 June 2019. AFP

Environmentalists mock Thai summit recycling drive

Despite offering chairs and notebooks made from recycled paper at a Bangkok summit, Thailand and its Southeast Asian allies were accused Sunday of a "greenwash" with their oceans and communities brimming with plastic refuse.

Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and China dump more than half of the eight million tonnes of plastic waste that end up in oceans every year, according to a 2017 Ocean Conservancy report.

The 10-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) —whose leaders are meeting this weekend in Bangkok — also receives more than a quarter of global plastic waste, mostly imported from developed economies.

But host country Thailand has been touting its "green" credentials during the two-day summit, showing off T-shirts spun from recycled plastic waste, biodegradable food containers, and 300

boxy chairs made out of recycled paper — all produced solely for the summit.

Greenpeace's Tara Buakamsri scoffed at the "unnecessary" production of new items for the summit, in a region where plastic bags, cups and plates are liberally doled out at supermarkets and street stalls.

"Using recyclable paper does not directly translate into a 'green' meeting," Tara told AFP.

"The hotel can provide chairs —why on earth are they producing new things?"

An organiser at the summit said the paper seats will be used for other ASEAN events later this year.

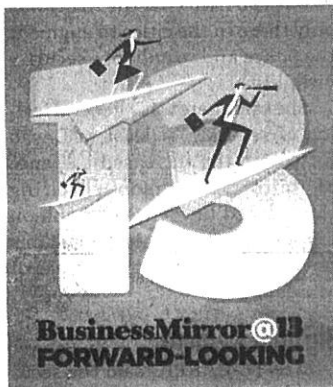
The talks saw the agreement of the "Bangkok Declaration" to combat marine debris, including plastic pollution, by 2025.

Environmentalists have said the declaration lacks concrete goals and timelines for reducing ocean waste and does not touch on imported plastic waste. **AFP**



'NCR ban could dent ecozone investments'

By ELIJAH FELICE E. ROSALES @alyasjah



Philippine Ecozones Association President Francisco S. Zaldarriaga said the President's order will prevent business-process outsourcing expansions, as BPO operations are mostly located in the capital. This could further slow down the devel-

DEVELOPERS over the weekend warned that investment inflows to economic zones could further decline in the face of President Duterte's moratorium on economic zone development in Metro Manila.

opment of the information-technology industry, where companies are mostly registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza).

"It may have nominal effects on the BPOs, specifically the Pogo [Philippine offshore gaming op-

erations]," Zaldarriaga told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

Industry sources indicated, however, that while the immediate impact may not be deep or extensive, the blow could be felt in the medium and long term as most of the BPOs

24.54%

The decline in overall investment inflows to the Peza in January-April 2019, from P39.08 billion in the same four-month period last year, to P29.49 billion

are headquartered and operate in the National Capital Region.

Investments in the IT industry from January to April declined 7.08 percent to P4.63 billion, from P4.98 billion in the same period last year. This was reflective of the overall slower investment inflows to the Peza that slumped 24.54 percent to P29.49 billion, from P39.08 billion, in the four-month period.

SEE "ECOZONE," A2

Economic zone developers and firms are apparently holding on to their expansion plans in anticipation of an overhaul in the country's corporate tax and incentives regime.

Zaldarriaga said investments in the manufacturing industry, however, will remain steady as long as the government does not rationalize tax incentives for economic zone firms. He added the President's order will most likely benefit developers who poured in capital in putting up economic zones outside of Metro Manila.

Manufacturers, such as semiconductor exporters, locate their assembly plants near but not within Metro Manila, such as in Southern Tagalog provinces Laguna and Cavite.

"For the main line manufacturing investors, however, there should be little effect assuming the existing Peza incentives are not tampered with. It

will have positive impact on our local ecozone developers who have invested billions of dollars in an effort to decongest Metro Manila," he added.

Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Foundation Inc. President Danilo C. Lachica said in a text message there is not much land in the capital at present to accommodate the registration of more economic zones.

"Our members are outside Metro Manila. There may not be big enough land in Metro Manila to accommodate factories of electronic companies," Lachica said.

The President last Monday issued an administrative order that seeks to spur growth in rural areas through the development of economic zones in the countryside.

In doing so, Duterte instructed the Peza to no longer accept, process or evaluate applications for the establishment of economic zones in Metro Manila. The order, however, does not prevent firms from operating on existing economic zones in the capital.