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Only a cyclone with heavy rains can help Angat Dam recover – NWRB chief

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

“Only a cyclone that will directly hit and bring huge volumes of rain over the watershed area can help Angat Dam recover.”

National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Sevilla David Jr. stressed this Wednesday as he hopes that a gradual increase in rain and tropical cyclone activity next month will help normalize the water level at Angat Dam.

“We are hoping that there will be rains that can significantly improve Angat Dam’s water level due to the peak of southwest monsoon next month,” David said.

He cited that the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has projected that two or three tropical cyclones may likely affect the country in July.

But if no significant rain falls over the watershed in Bulacan soon, the water level at Angat Dam could further dwindle

to 150 meters by the second or third week of July, he pointed out.

As of Wednesday, the water level at Angat Dam was further down to 161.30 meters, just 1.30 meters short of its 160-meter critical level. It was earlier projected to reach its crucial mark this weekend.

As a precautionary measure, NWRB has started to reduce the water allocation for domestic use on Wednesday from 46 cubic meters per second (cms) to 40 cms.



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Water, power lack intensifies

By Ronnel W. Domingo
@RonWDomingoINQ

Water users in Metro Manila and nearby provinces and power consumers across Luzon suffered a double whammy yesterday with rotational service interruptions as the water level at the Angat Dam continued to dwindle.

At the same time, a total of 1,240 megawatts of power-generating capacity remained out of commission, with some having gone under unplanned outage and others running at derated levels.

As of Wednesday morning, Angat's stock was pegged at 161.3 meters above sea level, just 1.3 meters above its critical low level.

Maynilad Water Services Inc. yesterday started implementing rotational supply interruptions throughout its concession area, lasting seven to 14

hours per the schedule.

This was the effect of reduced allocation of raw water from Angat Dam, which the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said was needed to prepare the dam for operations below the critical low level of 160 masl.

"We encourage our affected customers to store enough water when supply is available. Upon resumption of water service, please let the water flow out for a few seconds until the supply clears," Maynilad said in a statement.

"We appeal to our customers for their continued patience and understanding as we try to manage the effects of the reduced allocation on our operations," the company added.

Also, Manila Water Co. Inc. revised its own rotational service interruption scheme, which

has been running since March.

"This [reduction in allocation] will affect water supply going to our treatment plants and consequently, our ability to refill our reservoirs," Manila Water said.

"We are therefore constrained to implement a new scheme of rotational water service interruptions for the entire East Zone for about eight to 12 hours during night time," the company said.

Also yesterday, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan lashed out at the concessionaires, the NWRB and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System for their late notices.

As for the power situation, the Luzon grid was placed under Red Alert—when the expected peak demand for electricity was likely to exceed available generating capacity—for the 12th day since the problem in Luzon

started in March.

Yesterday's Red Alert status started at 9 a.m. and was lifted at 3:05 p.m., although this was planned to last until 4 p.m.

During this six-hour period, the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines estimated that demand in Luzon would peak at 11,134 MW while available capacity was only 10,962 MW.

Manila Electric Co. said that as of 4 p.m. yesterday, there had not been any need to implement rotational brownouts in its service areas.

According to the Department of Energy, four power plants located in Bataan and Batangas with a total capacity of 765 MW were still under forced or unplanned outage.

Six power plants were also running at lower-than-usual capacity, most of them hydropower plants that have problems with low water levels. INQ



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METRO

Water woes back? But they never left

After Manila Water announced a new schedule of service interruptions starting Tuesday, residents in parts of Mandaluyong and Quezon City were hit by a painful sense of déjà vu. They said water supply in their areas had yet to return to normal since March, when the crisis was at its peak. "The only thing we can think about is water," said Sharon Mallanao of Mandaluyong. —STORY

BY MATTHEW REYSIO-CRUZ AND MARIEJO S. RAMOS

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'The only thing on our minds is water'

As new service interruption schedules are announced, residents in affected areas are hit by a painful feeling of déjà vu

By Matthew Reysio-Cruz
and Mariejo S. Ramos
@InqMetro

Manila Water Co. Inc. may have announced a new schedule of water service interruptions effective on Tuesday but for some residents in Mandaluyong and Quezon City, the feeling of living in perpetual crisis that began at the peak of the supply shortage in March never went away.

Some residents of Barangays Barangka Drive and Barangka Ibaba in Mandaluyong City told the Inquirer on Wednesday that their water supply had not been normal all summer, while their taps had been completely dry since 3 p.m. on June 13—five days before the water concessionaire's announcement.

"The only thing we can think about is water," said Sharon Mallanao who has lived for almost 40 years at the border of the two villages.

"Instead of thinking about what we're going to eat, where we're going to work, or how we're going to live, the only thing on our minds at night is where we're going to get water," she added.

The scene in these communities gave off a striking sense of déjà vu. Empty pails lined sidewalks while incensed and exhausted residents waited hours for fire trucks to arrive, just as they did when the crisis was first felt in March.

"We pay our bills on time, we do not owe them [Manila Water] any money," said Alfre-



WATER WOES Vic-Vic Arellano, a resident of Barangay South Triangle in Quezon City, does the laundry in a hurry, afraid that the water supply might be cut off anytime. Water concessionaires have announced a new round of service interruptions due to dipping dam levels. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

do Quinto, Mallanao's neighbor for 20 years. "Why are we treated like this? All we are asking for is two hours each day with strong running water."

No bath, no work

Quinto, a company driver, said he had not worked for the past four days because there was no water for a bath. Several children missed school for the same reason. Zoilo Balan, an 80-year-old who repairs shoes for a living, had to bike back and forth to a refilling station to fill

several containers.

The sudden loss of water without any advisory had paralyzed them, Mallanao said.

"We know the dam levels are critical, but the interruptions should be fair," she stressed. "Manila Water gives a schedule but it's all for naught. They don't follow it."

On Wednesday morning, Angat Dam's elevation was at 161.30 meters above sea level (masl) and going down at a rate of around 0.4 meter daily, according to the Philippine Atmo-

spheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Critical level

It was expected to breach the critical level of 160 masl by the weekend and the National Water Resources Board urged Metro Manila consumers to conserve water.

The dam supplies over 90 percent of Metro residents' water needs.

Leonila Orca, a "sari-sari" store owner at Barangka Ibaba,



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said she had noted the service interruptions on a calendar since they first lost water on March 7. In April, there would be water from around 5 a.m. to midafternoon if they were lucky. But other times, they would have water for just 15 minutes.

"When there's a crisis like this, there's no rich or poor," Orca said. "Everyone struggles."

She has started buying water exclusively from grocery stores because other residents fell ill after drinking from refilling stations. Even now, in Mallanao's area, the water from fire trucks was at times too dirty even for washing dishes.

Four water refilling stations have already closed down in one small section of Barangka Ibaba since March, according to Jun Ilaw, owner of Alf's water refilling station. He was also currently trying to sell his own store due to the crisis.

"It is hard for me because I have barely made money since March, but I have to pay my employees," he said. "We still charge P35 per container, the same price when we started... Customers will not be able to afford it if I raise the price."

Laundry shop Bubbles Bee owner Nelson Macabanta, of Barangay Plainview, has been dealing with the lack of water since Monday.

"We have lost a lot [of money]," Macabanta told the Inquirer. He said they were behind work as a result and was contemplating whether or not they should continue operating.

Mimi Potente, who runs Katherine Eatery, also in Baran-

gay Plainview, has resorted to buying mineral water to wash the dishes. On Tuesday, she used up to 5 gallons which cost P40 each.

In Quezon City, residents have been complaining about the worsening water supply and inconsistent interruption schedules.

Jonah Ruth Tonido, 25, a business analyst at a company in Ortigas, said she had to take a half-day off from work when the water supply in her rented apartment in Barangay Culiati was suddenly cut off on Wednesday night.

Still abnormal

Since the water crisis last March, Tonido said the service in the barangay had yet to return to normal. As a result, they have had to adjust their routine around an eight-hour water interruption schedule, or from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.

"The water interruption has immensely affected the routine of working professionals like me. But on Tuesday, when I came home from work [before 9 p.m.], there was not a single drop [coming] from our faucets. I had to go to work in the morning, but the taps were still dry. They could've issued an advisory earlier so we could prepare for it," she said.

Since March, Vangie Candelario of Barangay San Martin de Porres said they had gotten used to a daily water rationing schedule of 4 a.m. to 5 p.m. But on Tuesday, their taps went dry starting at noon, a situation that lasted for 18 hours. —WITH REPORTS FROM CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE, JHESSET O. ENANO, MAXINE STA. CRUZ AND MOIRA NATIVIDAD INQ



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Metro taps run

dry

Maynilad, Manila Water customers hit by 7 to 14 hours service interruptions

BY JORDEENE B. LAGARE

WATER concessionaires started implementing on Wednesday service disruptions in Metro Manila and nearby provinces after regulators reduced water supply from Angat Dam.

Customers of Maynilad and Manila Water had no water for 7 to 14 hours. The two agencies service Metro Manila and parts of Rizal and Cavite provinces.

In its advisory on Wednesday, Maynilad said it wanted to maximize the limited supply and

ensure that all customers would have water for a few hours daily.

Manila Water, which serves the East Zone, announced on Tuesday that rotational water service interruptions lasting from 8 to 12 hours would be implemented during nighttime.

The Ayala-led utility firm, which has yet to fully restore its services following supply lack in March, said the reduction "will affect water supply going to our treatment plants and consequently, our ability to refill our reservoirs."

Maynilad said measures were in place to mitigate the impact of reduced allocation, including the extension of operating hours of pumping stations and reactivation of deep wells.

The West Zone concessionaire said it would deploy mobile water tankers and install static water tanks in severely affected areas.

"We encourage our affected customers to store enough water when supply is available. Upon resumption of water service, please let the water flow out for a few seconds until the supply clears," it added.

Both Maynilad and Manila Water said their customers would continue to experience little to no water supply until their allocation from Angat Dam is increased.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) reduced water allocation to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Sys-

tem because Angat Dam, which supplies the water needs of Metro Manila, was just a meter away from reaching its critical level.

From 46 cubic meters per second (cms), the supply for the MWSS was cut to 40 cms.

The water level at Angat hit 161 meters on Wednesday, just a meter away from its 160-meter critical mark.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the dam has not received sufficient rain despite the downpours that drenched

some areas in Luzon recently.

Pagasa hydrologist Richard Orendain said the dam only got 1 to 2 millimeters of rain.

Orendain said based on the daily water reduction rate, Angat Dam would reach the critical level mark in three days.

The weather bureau expects Angat to start "recuperating" in July. To reach the normal operating level of 180 meters, the dam has to receive at least 310 millimeters of rainfall, Orendain said.

WITH DIVINA NOVA
JOY DELA CRUZ



Pagasa warns of stronger cyclones due to El Niño

By HELEN FLORES

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) yesterday warned the public to brace for stronger tropical cyclones this year due to the prevailing El Niño phenomenon.

PAGASA deputy administrator Landrico Dalida said the abnormal warming of the Pacific Ocean enhances precipitation and could bring intense rain similar to that brought by Tropical Storm Ondoy (international name Ketsana) almost

10 years ago.

"If these (cyclones) hit the Philippines, these could be as devastating as Ondoy, which happened at the time we also had an El Niño," Dalida said in an interview.

Ondoy dumped excessive rainfall on Sept. 26, 2009, submerging many parts of Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Dalida explained that during an El Niño, the Pacific Ocean is very warm, triggering strong evaporation and condensation that form rain clouds.

"During El Niño, the cyclones become stronger," he said.

PAGASA administrator Vicente Malano, however, said the prevailing El Niño, which is considered as "weak," is not expected to reduce the number of tropical cyclones that would enter the Philippine area of responsibility this year.

An average of 19 to 20 cyclones visit the Philippines every year.

"We don't expect the recurrence of the cyclones, which happens during a strong El Niño," Malano said.

He said cyclones do not usually hit Philippine landmass during a strong El Niño.

About 10 to 13 cyclones may enter or develop inside the Philippine area of responsibility between June and November this year, based on PAGASA's latest forecast.

Citing latest predictions by international climate centers, PAGASA deputy administrator Flaviano Hilario said El Niño conditions may last until November this year.

The weather phenomenon, which started late last year, has also triggered droughts and

dry spells in many areas in the country in the past months.

Hilario noted that some parts of the country would continue to receive below-normal rain in the coming months due to El Niño.

This month, generally near-normal rainfall conditions will prevail in the country, except for patches of below-normal rainfall over Apayao, most of Ilocos region, Cagayan, Tarlac and Zambales.

PAGASA forecast generally near-normal to above-normal rainfall conditions over most of Luzon and the Visayas next

month, while generally below-normal rain is expected over most of Mindanao as well as over southern Visayas.

El Niño has also significantly brought down water levels in major dams in Luzon, including Angat Dam in Bulacan, which supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs.

The continued lack of rain may bring Angat's water supply down to a low-level or critical level of 160 meters this weekend, according to the National Water Resources Board.



FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

Waterless

Life in Metro Manila just became a lot more unlivable.

Since Tuesday, water rationing has begun. Rationing, of course, is just a euphemism. For many communities, this means the taps will be dry.

Although the rainy season has officially begun, rainfall has been sparse. The dams that supply us water are nearing critical level. If rains do not come in a week, Metro Manila, with its teeming millions, will be a desert.

Last Tuesday, the National Water Resources Board reduced supply from the dams to the water concessionaries. In turn, the concessionaires reduced water pressure levels. What that means is that communities sitting in higher ground will probably not be getting any water at all.

If this carries on for a few more days, even the water trucks we have will not suffice to supply the communities that need it. Prepare for an exodus of the urban population. The water crisis is worse than it has ever been.

This is a strange city. The main commuter rail line operates a fleet of buses to deal with passenger overflow. The companies entrusted with water distribution operate a fleet of water trucks.

The last element to complete the misery is power supply. Over the past few weeks, yellow and red alerts have been raised as our power reserves thin. All it takes is for a major power generator to fail and the city will not only be choked and dry but dark as well.

Metro Manila, with its creaking infrastructure and the bizarre way it is governed, is not about to be named among the world's most livable cities. That will not happen in our lifetime. But that is not an excuse to do nothing.

Infra

All the problems we now face are due to overreliance on outdated infrastructure that we should have started addressing years ago.

Recall that time when then president Benigno Aquino III was asked about traffic congestion at Edsa. He did not go through a list of things that need to be done. Instead, he dismissed the question by saying the congestion was a sign of progress. "It is that sort of attitude that brought us to this hell."

Metro Manila relies on one small and antiquated dam for 98 percent of its water supply. Worse, Angat Dam lies astride a fault line, making it vulnerable to a dam break. The situation ought to have been understood as anomalous decades ago. Yet nothing was done about it.

No administration profits politically from undertaking a project of long gestation. Whoever decides to do so invests much political capital dealing with opposition from environmentalists and the usual noisemakers complaining about incurring debt for project financing. Yet the project, when it is finally done will yield accolades from the successor administration and not from the real proponents.

Our politics does not reward far-sighted administration.



The Duterte administration has correctly chosen to address our strategic deficiency in infrastructure. Last year, for the first time ever, a Philippine government invested over 5 percent of GDP in infra.

Yet, last month, some Bayan Muna mouthpiece criticized the infra program for only creating construction jobs in the short term. Surprisingly, the media uncritically reported such a stupid comment without contesting it.

The witless rabble-rouser who said that should now explain why, by the latest SWS results, we have the lowest self-rated poverty ever. He should be sent to a seminar on "multiplier effects."

Government did the right thing privatizing the water concessions. That opened the door to massive investments in distribution efficiency, a lowering of non-revenue water and improved water delivery.

Yet no one saw any urgency in building additional raw water sources such as the Kaliwa River Dam. Not enough regulatory pressure was applied on the concessionaires to invest in new raw water sources. Instead, responding to populist agitation, bureaucrats pressured the concessionaires to postpone raising water tariffs as provided for in the contracts. Consequently, government lost international arbitration cases on precisely this issue.

Why the city dries up, our politicians are wasting crucial energy hyperventilating about a minor maritime mishap. They should be pressing for action on urgent infra issues that matter hugely to the quality of life of the people who inhabit this unplanned metropolis.

Our political class is the enemy of the basic comforts our people want.

Horizon

During the eighties, I consulted with the United Nations University on comparing development issues in Southeast Asia. I was constantly embarrassed meeting with colleagues in the region, bearing our six-year "medium-term plan." Everyone else had a 30-year development plan that they updated annually.

We have always had among the shortest planning horizon for a developing country. Asked by my colleagues why we had only a six-year plan, I sheepishly replied: "Because that is the term of the President." That was a non-answer.

With nothing more than a six-year plan to work with, it has always been difficult to imagine strategic infrastructure planning that gestates for a much longer time. It has always been difficult to ensure continuity in development programs.

Consequently, it was always difficult to attract long-term investments into our economy. The investment community was always worried priorities and programs might be discontinued. As a result, we attracted mainly carpetbaggers out to make a quick profit and go.

In this regard, no one was more damaging to the sustainability of our progress than Aquino III. He started his administration by cancelling the plans and projects of his predecessor — and then compounded that by initiating no new strategic initiative. That is a betrayal.





Department of Environment and Natural Resources
 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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The Manila Times

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Never-ending water woes



ROUGH
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BARELY three months after a water shortage of near-apocalyptic proportions, residents and businesses in Metro Manila and the nearby provinces have again been told to prepare for supply interruptions by the two water companies serving the metropolis.

According to Maynilad and Manila Water, about 12.3 million customers will be affected by the impending "rotational service interruptions."

The culprit, as before, is dry weather. In March, the El Niño drought was blamed for lowering the La Mesa reservoir (from

which Manila Water draws its supply) below a useful level. This time, a lack of rain – even though Pagasa has already declared the official start of the rainy season – has reduced the level of the Angat reservoir, which is the main source of 96

► Kritz B4

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percent of Metro Manila's water, to nearly 160 meters above sea level. The normal minimum operating level of Angat is 180 meters; 160 is below the level of dams outlet pipes. There is an emergency outlet below 160 meters, but it hasn't been used in nearly 10 years, and even if it is still functioning properly, it will only supply water at a reduced volume for a limited time before the reservoir level drops too low for any of the outlets.

Managing the March water shortage probably aggravated the current problem, as President Duterte ordered extra water re-

leased from Angat to replenish La Mesa. In hindsight, that was perhaps not a good call, but it highlights the fundamental problem the metropolitan area faces: There is not enough water to properly supply everyone all the time. Juggling the existing supply is the best anyone can do at this point.

The best available solution right now is the planned Kaliwa Dam project, which will create an additional water source that should be sufficient for at least a couple of decades at the current rate of population growth. Whether or not the government can get the project off the ground is still a bit uncertain, however, because of resistance to it by some special interest groups.

Those trying to stop the Kaliwa Dam project offer three arguments

for doing so: The reservoir and associated facilities will wipe out about 300 hectares of protected wilderness in the Sierra Madre. The area is also tribal land belonging to the Dumagat-Remontados people. Finally, the proposed financial structure of the project is politically questionable, since it was changed from a PPP project to a government project primarily funded by a loan from China. In fact, according to some political activists' uncanny ability to look at a large, four-legged mammal and see a zebra instead of a horse, the March water crisis may have been a contrivance by the Duterte administration to get people to accept an onerous deal from China.

Because of these factors, the dissenting groups say, the P18.7-

billion project should be canceled and a safer alternative found. There has not yet been any options of similar capacity proposed by anyone, however, meaning that the government faces a choice between following through with Kaliwa Dam project, or doing nothing at all.

The first two factors are valid concerns, and some reasonable solutions for them must be found and made part of the project. Unfortunately, there is not much to be done to mitigate the environmental damage the new dam and reservoir will cause; a considerable amount of land will be under water, and there is no way to avoid that short of killing the entire project. Besides maintaining the area surrounding the new reservoir as

a protected watershed, the government could consider designating a similar area of land elsewhere as a wilderness protected area. It's an imperfect solution, but at least the country would not have a net loss of wilderness area.

Likewise, there is not a perfect solution for addressing the displacement of the indigenous people, but an acceptable compromise can be found. Compensating the Dumagat-Remontados for their land, relocating them to suitable areas as near as possible to their home territory, and providing other financial and social assistance as they may require should all be part of the project costs.

Although addressing the environmental and social issues adds burdensome requirements to the

project, resolving them is clearly feasible. The third argument, that the project risks putting the country into a Chinese debt trap, is frankly ridiculous and ought to be ignored entirely. Despite the theoretical advantages of a PPP structure for major public works projects, the Philippines' experience with them has been less than satisfactory, and unnecessarily costly for consumers. The current tenuous state of the water supply infrastructure is a stark example of what can go wrong, and is the best argument against the original PPP plan for Kaliwa Dam. PPP may have other valid applications, but water supply for Metro Manila is clearly not one of them.

ben.kritz@manilatimes.net



Not water under the bridge

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Distressing cannot begin to describe the way millions of residents of Metro Manila are still suffering from lack of water supply in their homes and places of business.

Just two days ago, it was announced that Metro Manila residents would have to bear another round of water supply interruptions starting yesterday after the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said it will reduce the water allocation for Metro Manila.

In a news report recently, it said "the adjustment will mean a reduction of 500 million liters per day – a volume equivalent to 50,000 water trucks."

This is meant to "prevent a drastic plunge of the water level in Angat Dam, which is Metro Manila's biggest water source," the report further noted.

"No doubt, the adjustment adds a new level of annoyance to metro residents who already have the usual challenges of life in the National Capital Region.

"The water level in Angat Dam further dipped to 161.78 meters as of 6 a.m. of Tuesday," the agency explained. The amount is below the 180-meter minimum level required for normal operations. In short, the dam may reach a level so critical for the sweaty hordes should no supply adjustment be made.

Patience, patience, patience – consumers are asked to have more of this virtue, which is fast becoming another basic necessity in these times! For, indeed, its supply may be wearing thin, considering that the promised end to the hottest and "driest" summer ever – complicated by a few instances of power interruptions – was early this month.

Instead, we will have these rotational water supply interruptions – the best solution deemed by the NWRB, which has already instructed water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water to come up with their schedules for consumers.

These schedules, granting they are strictly followed, means some 6.9 million homes will have reduced water supply or not round-the-clock flow, and 5.4 million households will have "weak or no water supply for four to 17 hours," as reports say.

Said schedules are a little problematic for some people because it means changing routines or adding more chores to catch the trickles of water when time becomes the challenge.

With no water ranging from 4 p.m., 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. depending on where you live, you had better

get your laundry done within the day (when chances are you are out of the house and at work) because after that you can just rely on whatever you have managed to store for your cooking, dishwashing and washing up before sleep at night.

That is if you do get enough water pressure from your faucets to flow rather than drip like the last dregs of your sanity.

For those who cannot have their laundry done because it will mean added costs, you had better choose your laundry detergent well to prevent bad smells because you won't get any sunshine to help dry your clothes after you had lost sleep washing them at midnight.

And if you live in San Juan, it may mean no Wattah Wattah for you on Monday and no chance to spray unwitting passersby with the precious liquid.

No doubt, the adjustment adds a new level of annoyance to metro residents who already have the usual challenges of life in the National Capital Region.

Some 12 million customers are feeling the effects of these water supply interruptions day in and day out. They do not want to get used to it. Neither do they want the added problems two to three tropical storms could bring even though it may bring the much-needed increase in water level at Angat Dam.

These few millions may not seem like much against the hundred million-plus Filipinos living and breathing and taking baths today, but it is

significant because even one area alone with none or not enough water supply is like a slap in the face of progress.

As Water.org notes, "Out of 101 million Filipinos, nine million rely on unimproved, unsafe and unsustainable water sources and 19 million lack access to improved sanitation. Families without a safe water source in or near their homes often spend significant time and energy collecting water.

"Those without a sanitary toilet facility at home face a number of unattractive choices, including venturing out at night or suffering the embarrassment of asking to use the toilet of a neighbor.

"Thus, Filipinos consider water and sanitation access a matter of safety, pride, progress, and convenience, in addition to the health considerations."

Until water starts flowing 24/7 again, this matter will not be laid to rest.



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Pasig River body starts relocation of informal settlers living along estero

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) will be relocating some 270 informal settler families (ISF) along Estero de Magdalena in Tondo, Manila beginning June 20 (Thursday). PRRC, in coordination with the

National Housing Authority and local inter-agency committee (LIAC), will relocate the ISFs along Estero de Magdalena to Summer Homes in Trece Martires, Cavite.

Estero de Magdalena is one of the 47 identified tributaries of the Pasig River that suffers from immense solid and

liquid waste pollution problems.

It has been one of the priority projects of the PRRC with an allocated budget of around ₱17 million for its conversion into an environmental preservation area spanning 1,060 linear meters from Mayhaligue Street (Metropolitan Hospital) to Recto **►5**

Pasig River body...

Avenue.

The 270 families will be resettled in batches on June 20, 21, 26, and 27.

They had previously undergone social preparation through community dialogues, documentary completion, and site trips/inspections organized by PRRC with LIAC.

Each validated family will be given financial assistance under "Oplan Likas" by the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development will be in charge of the logistical provisions, such as rice, canned goods, and beverages.

"We express our sincerest gratitude to all our partners, most especial-

ly to Trece Martires Mayor Melandres de Sagun for keeping his promise of helping us find safer homes for the families of Estero de Magdalena. We believe that Mayor-elect Gemma Lubigan will help us continue this noble humanitarian effort to save our countrymen from living in a dangerous environment," PRRC Executive Director Jose Antonio Goitia said.

"The relocation of 270 informal settler families of Estero de Magdalena is also part of our commitment to fast track the rehabilitation of the Pasig River, which also contributes largely to the Manila Bay rehabilitation," he added.

Based on the National Solid Waste Management Status Report from 2008

to 2014, the synthesized waste generation rates in Metro Manila or the average weight of solid waste generated by an individual per day is approximately 0.7 percent kilograms.

Applying this to the case of Estero de Magdalena, the relocation of 270 ISFs, with an average household size of four persons each, equates to the diversion of approximately 303,534 kilograms of solid waste annually.

Meanwhile, PRRC's River Patrol Unit will lead the simultaneous dismantling of illegal structures vacated by the ISFs in collaboration with the Metro Manila Development Authority and Manila's City Engineering Office.

PRRC will be providing trucks for the transport of the ISF's belongings and air-conditioned vans as they move to their new homes.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

BASURA NAGKALAT SA MGA ESTERO NG TAGUIG

WALA akong nabalitaang naglunsad ng tapat at seryosong proyekto si Mayor Ma. Laarni "Lani" Cayetano na paglilinis ng mga estero sa lungsod ng Taguig simula ng maging alkalde ito sa nakalipas na siyam na taon.

Kaya, marumi, maitim at hanggang ngayon ay maraming basura ang mga estero sa Taguig.

Simula sa Hunyo 30, kongresista na uli si Lani Cayetano kung saan kinatawan siya ng ikalawang distrito ng Taguig sa mababang kapulungan ng Kongreso.

Noong bago siya maging alkalde ng lungsod, hanggang ilang buwan bago maganap ang eleksyon noong Mayo 13, ang address na ginagamit ni Cayetano ay iyong bahay ng mga Cayetano sa Brgy. Bagumbayan, bahagi ng unang distrito.

Sa unang distrito ay maraming estero na sobra-sobrang dumi, ngunit hindi naman ipinalinis ni Cayetano.

Simula sa Hunyo 30, ang alkalde ng lungsod ay si Lino Cayetano, kapatid nina Senadora Juliana Pia Cayetano at Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano.

Sana, umaksyon si Mayor Lino upang maging malinis ang mga estero sa Taguig.

Alam ko, hindi sanay si Lino sa marumi.

Kaya, noong naging kapitan ito ng barangay at kongresista ng distrito dos ay hindi umikot at dinalaw ni Lino ang kanyang nasasakupan.



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DENR TO PURSUE PLANTING OF TREES IN PUBLIC LANDS OF BAGUIO, CAR

BAGUIO CITY: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera Administrative Region (DENR-CAR) will pursue the planting of assorted tree species in public lands, not only in the Summer Capital, but also in other parts of the region as part of the government's effort to sustain environment protection and preservation for soil erosion control and source of water for the populace. DENR-CAR Regional Director Ralph Pablo said the agency was spearheading the planting of trees in forest reservations, military reservations, government-owned lands, parks and public places, if applicants for the issuance of tree-cutting permits decide to turnover to the office the replacement trees of the trees that would be cut. Under existing rules and regulations, applicants of tree-cutting permits are required to plant replacement trees, which is 1:50 for planted trees and 1:100 for natural grown trees.

GABY B. KEITH



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Task force bares illegal logging in Agusan town

By **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

BUTUAN CITY – The anti-illegal logging task force of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday uncovered a clandestine operation of timber poachers in the forest jungle of Bunawan town, Agusan del Sur.

However, the timber poachers fled when the task force arrived at the site in Barangay Consuelo, Bunawan.

The exact location of the reported clandestine illegal logging operations of timber poachers was discovered through a drone operated by the task force.

The operation was also assisted by the police and Army personnel.

The forest products retrieved during the operation, including the conveyances, have been deposited at DENR- CENRO safekeeping.

Meanwhile, DAR 13 Regional Executive Director Atty. Felix S. Alicer on Wednesday ordered Bunawan CENR Officer Achilles Ebron to conduct a thorough investigation on the operations of timber poachers in the southern-tip of the province.



Vizcayanos talk over mining in forum, socmed

By Abe Almirol

KASIBU, Nueva Vizcaya—As the country celebrates the environment month, advocates of “responsible mining” battle their anti-mining adversary in various social media platforms.

An online petition currently hosted at www.change.org calls for Pres. Rodrigo Duterte to renew the permit of OceanaGold’s Didipio Mine in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya. Another petition at www.bataris.org seeks the non-renewal of the permit of Didipio mine.

In a forum hosted by the group Alyansa Tigil Mine in Quezon City on Tuesday, Gov. Carlos M. Padilla declared his stand against the extension of the Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement now in the hands of OceanaGold Philippines Inc. which will end on June 20.

An FTAA is a permit issued to a multinational company to explore and extract minerals in the Philippines, provided that the company will share technology and financial resources.

OceanaGold’s FTAA No. 1 was issued 25 years ago, and now covers a total of 12,000 hectares, which includes the currently operating mine in a 725-hectare area.

“I will exercise the full powers of my office to strictly implement the Environment Code of Nueva Vizcaya. There will be no sacred cows where the rights and welfare of the people are concerned,” Padilla declared.

Meanwhile, in Barangay Didipio, people whose livelihood depend on the operation of the mine voiced out their opinion that they gained favorably from the mines.



OceanaGold mining sa N. Vizcaya pinasasara

NAGSANIB puwersa ang mga indigenous community, local government leader, at environmental advocate sa Nueva Vizcaya upang himukin si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na isara ang higanteng kompanya ng minahan na OceanaGold Philippines Inc. (OGPI) na nag-ooperate ng copper at gold mine sa lalawigan.

Sa ginanap na press conference nitong Martes, sinabi ni Leon Dulce, national coordinator ng Kalikasan People's Network for Environment, isa sa mga grupong sumusuporta sa kampanya laban sa foreign mining company, hiniling nila kay Pangulong Duterte na kanselahin na ang Financial and Technical Assistant Agreement (FTAA) ng Australian-Canadian large scale mining corporation na OGPI.

"Oceana Gold's destructive big mining has been barricaded by indigenous communities, recently opposed in a unanimous provincial council resolution, and is even currently inves-

tigated by nine United Nations special rapporteurs. It is high time for the Duterte government to cancel OceanaGold's FTAA license and compel the destructive mine to answer for its various right violations," giit ni Dulce.

Nabatid na ang FTAA ng OceanaGold ay mawawalan na ng bisa sa darating na Hunyo 30 ng taong kasalukuyan matapos ang 25 taon.

"We believe that more than a decade of human rights violations and other negative impacts against communities and ecosystems in Nueva Vizcaya are a strong basis for denying the mining company's extension," dagdag pa ni Dulce.

Sinuportahan naman ng Alyansa Tigil-Mina (ATM) sa pangunguna ni Jaybee Garganera, national coordinator, ang panawagan ng mga apektadong komunidad na ipasara ang Didipio mines sa Kasibu town, sa nasabi ring lalawigan.

Hiniling ng ATM sa Department of Environment and Natu-

ral Resources (DENR) na pinamumunuan ni Secretary Roy Cimatu na huwag nang payagan pa na makapag-apply o ma-renew ang lisensiya sa FTAA ng nabanggit na higanteng mining company na mag-eexpire na sa katapusan ng buwan ng Hunyo.

Malaki umano ang paniwala ng ATM na gumawa ng malaking paglabag sa environmental laws ng bansa ang OGPI, gaya nang paninira ng watershed, polusyon sa mga 'water resources' at pagbawas sa mga gamit na tubig ng mga residente.

"The human right of the residents in Didipio have been violated and abused, as concluded by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), when it issued its resolution last 2011. The CHR has recommended to the Philippine government to consider withdrawing the mining contract of OGPI. There is no more excuse for the continued mining operations of OGPI in Nueva Vizcaya." paliwanag ng grupo. (Dolly Cabreza)



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Strategic Communication Initiatives Service

Replication of successful agroforestry co-ops sought

THE Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) is pushing for the replication of nine successful agroforestry cooperatives, including the notable reforestation efforts in Imbayao, Mount Kitanglad, Bukidnon that is now under review for key profit-sharing models.

The profit-sharing models of the nine agroforestry cooperatives including one found over the 47,270-hectare Mount Kitanglad Natural Park in Malaybalay City is being documented by think tank Searca based in Los Baños, Laguna.

"The objective is to replicate the success models of these job-generating, export-earning forest farms all over Southeast Asia," Searca said in a statement.

All of the nine agroforestry cooperatives hold a Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) contract with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

CBFM is government's instrument and strategy for sustainable



Photo shows the banana-coconut intercropping system of the San Isidro Upland Farmers Multi Purpose Cooperative in its agroforestry concession in Santiago, Agusan del Norte. SEARCA PHOTO

forest management to help reverse forest denudation.

In Luzon, Searca is also looking into the benefit sharing models of the Tao Kalikasan Foundation of the Philippines in Labo, Camarines Norte; LBN Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MPC) in Vintar, Ilocos Norte; and Caunayan MPC in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte.

In the Visayas, Searca has identified the Nalundan United Farmers Association Inc. in Bindoy, Negros

Oriental; and Katilingban sang Pumuluyo nga naga-Atipan sang Watershed sa Maasin in Maasin, Iloilo.

Searca has identified in Mindanao the San Isidro Upland Farmers MPC in Santiago, Agusan del Norte; Limatong Dalumangkom Bual Farmers Multipurpose Association in Pigcawayan, North Cotabato; and Malakiba People's Improvement MPC in Davao City.

The Searca benefit-sharing study is funded by the Asean Working Group

on Social Forestry. It is tasked to come up with policy recommendations for DENR as it reviews CBFM's aim in providing socioeconomic benefits to community.

Searca documentation tools include key informant interview guide, guide questions for focus group discussion, video recording, and primer on benefit-sharing. Field documentation was already conducted in the two Visayas sites and the Davao City site.

CONRAD M. CARIÑO



Founded 1859

The Manila Times

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PERMIT FOR 500MW HYDRO PROJECT DENIED

KIBUNGAN, Benguet: The Benguet Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) denied a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) for the 500-megawatt pump storage hydro project in Barangay Badeo. The application of Coheco Badeo Corp. (CBC), proponent of the project, was denied due to alleged overlapping of the area with what Penro previously granted a Forest Land Agreement. In his letter to Apolinario Bagano, Sr., CBC

chief executive officer, Penro's Carlis Arida said, based on the evaluation and observation of the area being applied for and after a series of technical meetings to exhaust possible remedies giving both parties enough time, the agency recommended denial of the company's application for SLUP. Penro said that the area being applied for in Barangay Badeo overlaps the permitted area of the Cordillera Hydroelectric Power Corp., which is now building its proposed 60-MW run-of-river plant in Kapangan and Kibungan towns.

DEXTER A. SEE



LGUs vs tourism

I think it's time we focused on something we have rarely done: look at the local government units (LGUs). When I talk to business people, one of the biggest complaints is the difficulties LGUs cause.

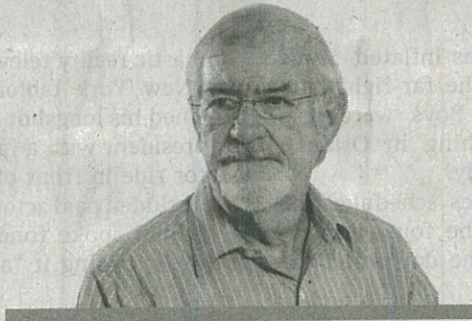
I don't wish to generalize, but well-run LGUs appear to be the exception, and this causes me concern about going federal (the other concern is cost). Few mayors, or governors, if it comes to that, have the management skills and experience to be able to run an administration efficiently—and honestly (petty graft to get permits approved is rampant). There are too many delays and frustrations businesses suffer that are caused by LGUs.

Much of it is ineptitude, with too few staff with the experience needed. For one, permits that need to be renewed every year, but can take months to renew. This raises the question—why? Nothing has changed within that year, so renewal, if at all, should be automatic. If money is needed, then just send in a check at the end of the year. If the organization does change, report it at the time.

Basic services are poor or even nonexistent. In Siargao, where I was recently, the government ordered all establishments to buy three rubbish bins and segregate the waste. A contractor collects all the rubbish in one truck so the consolidated mess is dumped into an unregulated landfill.

On sewerage, I couldn't get statistics, but I have little doubt there are very, very few towns with a full, centralized sewerage system connected to every establishment and household. Again, in Siargao, responsible organizations have put in place their own four-tank system, but homes and small businesses never do. One shudders to wonder where their excrement goes.

Tap water is too often undrinkable. In



LIKE IT IS

PETER WALLACE

Siargao, organizations have had to drill their own deep well—and the LGU charges them for it.

Still in Siargao, they are building a huge stadium, which is nice as sports need such a thing. But there is no fully equipped and manned hospital, in a beach destination where surfing and motorcycle accidents are frequent. It would seem basketball is more important than life. In too many places, the city or municipal hall is the most grandiose building. My dad had a heart attack on the beach in Boracay. He died. There was no hospital. That was many years ago; now there is one public hospital.

Siargao is a beautiful spot. It started off as a must-go destination for surfers and backpackers. Today, it is rapidly developing as a competition to Boracay in its beauty and attractions. But it faces the same risks as Boracay: overcrowding and pollution, with a local government not implementing the necessary controls and providing the needed service for now, let alone the future.

Controlling the first is easy—decide on the maximum number of tourists that can

be comfortably handled, and allow only the requisite number of rooms. Then provide potable water, full sewerage and environmentally friendly waste disposal systems. The roads are mostly good concrete, two lanes, although there are some that are still dirt. But they can follow after a hospital is built.

Having got all that off my chest, Siargao is a wonderful place to visit. Island-hopping is delightful and extremely well-organized on large bancas that go from one beautiful spot to the next. There's lunch of fresh grilled seafood eaten under the coconut trees and accompanied by a cold San Mig on the side.

Restaurants are of international standard, something I certainly didn't expect, with a range of cuisines that they somehow manage to provide despite the logistical difficulties of getting fresh foods in. This is the result of foreign chefs falling in love and staying.

Siargao started as a backpackers' dream, a great place to surf. It is turning into a getaway for the better-off. That's what's needed nationally. We don't want backpackers crowding and spoiling locations and spending little. The statistic we always see is the number of tourist arrivals, but this focus is all wrong. It should be the revenue from tourists.

In 2017, there were about 6.6 million of them. They spent an estimated average of P50,100 each. That's too little if we want the wealthy to come here. What tourism has to fight is the idea that unrestricted growth is good; it's not. Every locale can only handle a certain number without upsetting the environment. Man has already done enough destruction of that.

E-mail: wallace_likeitis@wbf.ph



**MAGTANONG
KAY ATTORNEY**

DR. PERSIDA V. RUEDA-ACOSTA
Chief Public Attorney

**Pagsusunog
ng anumang klaseng
solid waste**

Dear Chief Acosta,

Madalas na sinusunog ng aming kapitbahay ang kanilang mga basura at dahun-dahon sa kanilang bakuran. Sila ay nakatira sa tabi ng aming bahay kaya 'yung usok mula sa siga ay napupunta rin sa amin at nakapeperhuwisyo siya, lalo na kapag may sinampay sa labas dahil nangangamoy usok ito kaya nais kong malaman kung mayroon ba siyang nilalabag na batas sa kanyang ginagawa? — Gino

Dear Gino,

Ang batas na sumasaklaw sa inyong sitwasyon ay ang Section 48 (3) ng Republic Act 9003 o mas kilala bilang "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2008" kung saan nakasaad ang mga sumusunod:

"Section 48. Prohibited Acts - The following acts are prohibited:

(3) The open burning of solid waste;"

Dagdag pa rito, nakalagay sa nabanggit na batas ang mga parusa sa sinumang tao na magsusunog ng

mga solid waste. Ito ay nakalahad sa Section 49 (b) ng nasabing batas:

"(b) Any person who violates Sec. 48, pars. (2) and (3), shall, upon conviction be punished with a fine of not less than three hundred pesos (P300) but not more than one thousand pesos (P1,000) or imprisonment of not less than one (1) day but not more than fifteen (15) days or both;"

Bilang panghuli, maari rin managot sa Republic Act (R.A.) No. 8749 o mas kilala bilang "Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999" ang sinumang magdudulot ng air pollution sa ating himpapawid alinsunod sa Section 5 (b):

"(b) 'Air pollution' means any alteration of the physical, chemical and biological properties of the atmospheric air; or any discharge thereto of any liquid, gaseous or solid substances that will or is likely to create or to render the air resources of the country harmful, detrimental, or injurious to public

health, safety or welfare or which will adversely affect their utilization for domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, or other legitimate purposes;"

Malinaw sa mga nabanggit na mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang pagsusunog ng anumang klase ng solid waste tulad ng basura at mga dahon at sinuman ang mapatunayang gumawa nito ay maaaring maparusahan. Sa inyong sitwasyon, ang ginagawa ng inyong kapitbahay na pagsusunog ng kanilang basura at dahon ay maliwanag na paglabag sa batas at maaari siyang makulong o pagmultahin, depende sa diskresyon ng hukuman.

Nawa ay nasagot namin ang inyong mga katanungan. Nais naming ipaalala sa inyo na ang opinyong ito ay nakabase sa inyong mga naisalaysay sa inyong liham at sa pagkakaintindi namin dito. Maaaring maiba ang opinyon kung mayroong karagdagang impormasyong ibibigay. Mas mainam kung personal kayong sasangguni sa abogado.



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Drivers of Industry 4.0

BANGKOK, Thailand: The country hosted last week ProPak Asia, deemed as the largest and biggest processing and packaging event in the region. The three-day international trade show covered several areas including food and beverage, pharmaceutical, printing, among other things. In fact, our very own DTI was also there to help promote the Philippine version of ProPak happening February next year.

The manufacturing industry is increasingly becoming a hot segment for disruption. In fact, ProPak Asia featured emerging technologies, such as processingtech, packagingtech, printtech drinktech, among others. These are further developed and enhanced by several drivers that help push the industry to transform, adapt, and be disrupted.

First is the environment and the increasing regulatory compliances. Plastic pollution especially in developing countries has been discussed many times. Globally, Bangladesh was the first country to ban the use of plastics. Taiwan also passed a law that will eventually eradicate the use of single use plastics; the country has given itself a leadtime of about 10 years to fully take out plastic in their society.

A 2015 study by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) indicates that the Philippines is one of the five countries that are top producers of plastic waste globally. While at the national level the laws on banning the use of plastic are still to be created, some of our local government units have already started to ban the use of plastic bags in retail outlets. Cities like Las Pinas, Makati, Quezon City, Pasig and Pasay have started doing so.



MANAGEMENT
ACTION

**KAY CALPO
LUGTU**

The second driver is the labor conditions in the Philippines. Senate Bill 1826 or the "Act Strengthening Workers' Rights to Security of Tenure" has already been approved last month by the Senate on its 3rd and final reading. This means the bill will now be transmitted to the President for signature and would later on provide the implementing rules and regulations for the law to take effect. This would greatly impact the hiring practices of

manufacturing companies due to the potential increase in labor cost, and would likely form the business feasibility of investing in automation for further cost and production efficiency.

The third driver is the demographics and culture. The Philippines, being a young country, is a market where millennials and Gen Z comprise the segment that is more environment conscious. The segment prefers to purchase consumer goods that are more environmentally sustainable. Several studies point to the preference of this generation to buy and promote products that are environmentally friendly and sustainable.

In the lifecycle of any manufacturing company, the packaging of the product becomes the most critical aspect as this is the first customer touch point. The visual and aesthetic look of the product, as well as labels and

packaging description, determines whether the buyer will end up putting the item in the cart. Manufacturing firms will need to consider upgrading, if not, changing their packaging lines to adapt to these drivers. This is a vital component for manufacturing companies to strategically think about and plan ahead to remain relevant in the marketplace.

Many technology companies provide capabilities in this space to help the manufacturing industry. Given the drivers that push companies to consider Industry 4.0, it is essential to consider these as part of their overall strategy moving forward.

Kay Calpo Lugtu is the COO of Hungry Workhorse, a digital and culture transformation firm; Co-Founder of Caucus, Inc. and Deputy Director of Global Chamber Manila. Her advocacies include data privacy, financial literacy, and nation-building. The author may be reached at kaycalpolugtu@hotmail.com



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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Website: <http://www.denr.gov.ph> / E-mail: web@denrgov.ph

June 06, 2019

DENR Administrative Order

No. 2019-06

SUBJECT : ADOPTION OF THE PHILIPPINE MASTER PLAN FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT 2016 -2028 (PMPCRFD)

Pursuant to Section 16, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution which provides that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature and Executive Order No. 192, series of 1987, which mandates the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to be the primary agency responsible for the conservation, management, development, and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources, specifically forest and grazing lands, mineral resources, including those in reservation and watershed areas, and lands of the public domain in order to ensure equitable sharing of the benefits derived therefrom for the welfare of the present and future generation of Filipinos. In line with this, the DENR adopts the Philippine Master Plan for Climate Resilient Forestry Development as the national framework plan for the forestry sector with a vision towards a climate resilient and sustainably managed watersheds and forest ecosystems providing environmental and economic benefits.

Section 1. Implementation of the Master Plan. All activities and targets provided in the Master Plan shall be translated into operations plans indicating targets until 2028. All other forestry related plans, such as watershed management plans, forest land use plans, and the like, should be consistent with the Master Plan.

The Forest Management Bureau (FMB) is hereby tasked to coordinate and assist the Regional Offices in developing or updating operations plans and targets.

All DENR offices shall ensure that the target of the Master Plan is mainstreamed into plans and programs of the local government units and other government agencies concerned.

Sec. 2. Budgetary Requirements and Financing Program. The budgetary requirements identified in the Master Plan will come from various sources, however, the DENR must consider the goals, targets, and objectives of the Master Plan in its annual allocation of funds.

Sec. 3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting. The FMB shall develop a system for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of the implementation of the Master Plan. It is also responsible for the identification of indicators to measure progress towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Master Plan and facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

Sec. 4. Repealing Clause. This Order hereby repeals DENR Administrative Order No. 1992-23 and DENR Administrative Order No. 1992-40, and all other Orders, Circulars, Memoranda or other issuances inconsistent herewith.

Sec. 5. Separability Clause. If any of the provisions of this Order shall be declared unconstitutional, all other provisions not declared as such shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 6. Effectivity Clause. This Order shall take effect immediately after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation, in the webpage of the Forest Management Bureau, and upon receipt of the Office of the National Administrative Registrar from the UP Law Center.

ROY A. CIMATU
Secretary





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BusinessMirror

Always look at today's business

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WOMEN OF BACCOOR'S EMBATTLED MUSSEL INDUSTRY STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL



TITLE:

STORY & PHOTO BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

DATE

(This story was produced with the support of Internews' Earth Journalism Network.)

A WAFT of air from the east along Kawit, Cavite, brings memories of mornings by the sea. Silhouette figures become clearer and the sight brings the solid image the nose sensed: mussels, piled dozens on stainless steel buckets and rattan trays on a table made of wood.

Behind one of these is Charmel Dela Cruz (not her real name), a 4-foot-8 24-year-old mussel trader. Her medium-built frame is hidden by a faded pink floral dress under a blue apron. Like fellow sellers, Dela Cruz is already at her stall along Antero Soriano Highway, at the north end of the Manila-Cavite Expressway (Cavite), before the crack of dawn; wiping the tabletop, sweeping, while waiting for the mussels to arrive.

While she's considered a neophyte trader, Dela Cruz already knows the ins and outs of the business, its opportunities and challenges: from growing these cheap, protein-rich seafood to harvesting, buying and selling them fresh, or processing and retailing.

"Selling mussel has been my family's source of income and livelihood ever since I can remember," Dela Cruz said in Filipino.

Her parents originally came from Albay, a province in the Bicol region, a hundred kilometers south of here. She was eight when they migrated to Cavite to cash in on the booming mussel industry at the time.

"My uncle was first to come here; then everybody followed," she said.

Just a way of life

IN Bacoor, a town south of the country's capital city Manila, growing and harvesting mussels have become a way of life. This is true for Dela Cruz's family.

Starting a small family of her own, this high-school graduate and mother of a 3-year-old girl is currently the lone breadwinner in the family. Her income relies on the sale of mussels.

Dela Cruz's husband of three years used to work as a maintenance man at a small company. He's currently unemployed but training to qualify for employment as a security guard.

Dela Cruz herself worked in the past as a factory worker for several electronic manufacturers in Laguna and Batangas.

"But I decided to stick to selling mussel. This is better. Here, I can earn P1,000 a day compared to the mini-

diver, harvesting for a mussel farm in Bacoor. During that time, he receives only P5 a day. Before, he doesn't even know how to swim but he had to learn to earn a living," she said.

Despite being "retired" because of aneurysm, the 74-year-old Rogelio continues to help his wife tend to their store. He considered raising their children well as a source of happiness.

"And my wife is always here with me."

Most of their customers are motorists, while others are residents in nearby villages.

Dela Cruz and Lager were among the many women traders selling oysters and mussels, with their wooden stalls along major thoroughfares in coastal towns in Cavite.

Not hard to find

MUSSELS farming and trade has its ups and downs for Anne Maceda, 32, a mussel trader at the Paranaque Fisherman's Wharf for five years now.

"Here money is not hard to find as long as you are willing to work," Maceda said, pointing to a group of young children who works for a living while "playing" by cleaning mussels.

According to Maceda, the children get to earn P20 for washing out grime from each mussel.

"It's voluntary, really. And they enjoy it," she said. "But we pay them because they are a big help." Maceda said the children also earn allowance for school.

Julie Cuela, 62, who has been selling mussels at a public market in Sucat, Parañaque, for 10 years now, said she finds selling mussels a lucrative trade. She buys wholesale from Maceda with a P10-discount for every gallon. A gallon of mussel contains about 2.5 kilos. Normally, it would only cost around P100 at the so-called *bulungan*. It could sell to as much as P250.

Whether they are wives, mothers, or daughters—many women have been empowered by Bacoor's embattled mussel industry.



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...mum wage I get working at [an] electronics [factory] where I have to spend on transportation and food," she said, adding the she also sees her weekly pay cut when she reports late.

The daily minimum wage rate in the Calabarzon region is P303 to P400. Highly urbanized cities implement a higher minimum wage as approved by the National Wages and Productivity Commission.

On the highway

SIXTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD Rosie Lager said she and her husband Rogelio were able to raise all five children, including two college graduates, from selling mussel along the road.

All her children now have their own family. Lager is now sending one of her grandchildren to college.

"Since getting married in 1972, this has been our source of income and livelihood," she said. "I am from Tacloban, Leyte, but when I met my husband, I decided to move and stay with him here in Cavite. We started selling mussel when my husband worked as a

Aquatic resources

BACOR City is the birthplace of mussel farming in the Philippines.

Before the 1950s, mussel is not even considered food, but a pest in oyster farms.

The discovery that mussel is edible gave birth to the idea it can also be cultured like an oyster.

It was in 1955 when what is now known as the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources's (BFAR) Oyster Farming Station in Binakayan, Cavite, set up a demonstration mussel farm to promote mussel farming.

Many fishermen in Bacoor decided to grab the opportunity. By the 1960s, mussel farms quickly spread in many areas in the country.

While mussel farming in other parts of the country is thriving, the same cannot be said in Bacoor and other towns in Cavite, such as Kawit and Cavite City. Bacoor is experiencing a rapid shift from an agriculture-based economy to a residential and commercial urban center.

Bacoor's growing population is also

mussel industry.



ROSIE and Rogelio Lager



population is
also

putting pressure on the coastal environment. It is currently the second most populated city in Cavite, with 600,609 people based on a 2015 census.

Pollution, climate change and unbridled development are slowly killing the source of income and livelihood of thousands of small fishermen in Bacoor, a town which belongs to the Manila Bay region.

Threats of progress

ACCORDING to Myrna Candinato, mussel farming is the way of life of many coastal families in Bacoor.

"Before, we used to pick *halaan* (clam) and would not have to go far to catch fish," she said. "Not anymore."

Candinato is president of the Alyansa ng mga Magdaragat sa Bacoor of Barangay Maliksi III. She has been a mussel farm operator for almost three decades and has witnessed this agricultural subsector's growth. Now, she fears that an ambitious reclamation project in Bacoor will spell its doom.

Candinato's family maintains nearly 3 hectares of mussel farm in Bacoor. She is also into buying and selling mussels and owns two small motorized fishing boats that she rents out to small fishermen.

With her small business, she has close to a hundred small vendors under her wing; all are selling mussel on a consignment basis.

"Some of them are older than me. Senior citizens," she said, who all strongly felt the various threats to Bacoor's small mussel industry. "If the industry dies, they are sure to suffer," she said.

Hosts, hectareage

OYSTERS and mussels are two of Bacoor's main products today still despite dwindling production.

Bacoor takes pride in owning vast tracts of mussel and oyster farms that directly and indirectly benefit tens of thousands of families.

According to the Bacoor City Agriculture Office, individual oyster and mussel farmers can operate a 1-hectare farm. Each farm employs between five and seven individuals, Chua said.

The city also hosts oyster and mussel farmer-investors from other towns in Cavite, Laguna and Batangas.

Bacoor has a total of 957.25 hectares of coastal water and a total coastline of 5.78 kilometers. Of these, about 300 hectares are designated aquaculture area.

Currently, the city produces 6,000 gallons of mussels a day.

The figure is based on recorded daily production as obtained from two private and one public market, where harvests are regularly brought in by the city's oyster and mussel farmers.

This does not include the huge volume of oysters and mussels that directly goes out to entrepreneurs who maintain oyster and mussel stalls in and outside the city, including Fisherman's Wharf and fish ports in Parañaque City, Rosario, Cavite and the Navotas Fish Port.

A serious threat

MUSSEL traders in Bacoor had experienced huge setbacks caused by water pollution, as it affects the growth of this naturally occurring seafood.

As the price of mussel depends on its size, mussel growers or farmers observe that their products are no longer as "healthy" as they were when they started out in Bacoor.

But a more serious threat to Bacoor's mussel industry, as in other areas, is the occurrence of red tide.

The BFAR occasionally issues Shellfish Bulletins advising the public whenever there's red tide.

"When there's red tide, we go home," Dela Cruz said.

She also believes it has something to do with the rapid change of weather systems, which affects the growth of mussel—or worse—cause mussel to die.

"Whenever it suddenly rains, and the sun shines, the mussels

we get one



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the mussels

we get are small because they are affected," Dela Cruz added. "[I think this] has something to do with climate change."

Maceda said that whenever there's red tide, even areas that are unaffected by it suffer huge losses as the public would think that the oysters and mussels they are selling are affected, too.

"Whenever there are photographers and cameraman going here, we feel bothered thinking it maybe because there's red tide," she said.

Not sole problem

BELIEVING that water pollution triggers the occurrence of red tide, Lager said such is precisely the reason they support the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

However, she said rehabilitation should not lead to the relocation of oyster and mussel farms, as thousands of people whose income and livelihood are dependent on this cultured seafood will be adversely affected.

The occurrence of red tide is a major setback in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, particularly for oyster and mussel farmers.

From January to May alone, the BFAR has issued eight Shellfish Bulletins, which indicated that, based on laboratory tests it conducted, shellfish collected in a certain area are positive for paralytic shellfish poisons that are beyond the regulatory limit.

As such, it warns the public that shellfish gathered in an area affected by red tide are not safe for human consumption, thereby forcing mussel traders to stop doing business for days, or sometimes, weeks.

For Candinato, the intensifying typhoons brought about by climate change spell doom for mussel farm operators each time it strikes Cavite. For mussel growers, it means loss with zero chance of recovery—except for a few bamboo poles they must salvage in the open seas after the storm.

"Whenever there's a typhoon, all our bamboo poles are wiped

out. We lose everything," she said. But strong typhoon is not the only problem mussel farm operators encounter.

Manila Bay cleanup

ON January 27, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources launched a P47-billion, seven-year Manila Bay rehabilitation program. The massive rehabilitation activities aim to address the water pollution that has been bugging coastal waters in Manila Bay.

The high level of fecal coliform bacteria in Manila Bay poses a serious health risk not only to those who continue to swim and bathe in its waters, but also to consumers of fish and other seafood like oysters and mussels that are grown there.

Pollution caused by direct discharge of untreated wastewater and poor solid waste management are major contributors to the degradation of Manila Bay.

The waters of Bacoor, Cavite, are no exception, as water pollution knows no boundary.

Gil S. Jacinto, a professor at the Marine Science Institute-University of the Philippines Diliman, told the BUSINESSMIRROR the fact that the BFAR allows the growing of oysters and mussels means Bacoor's waters is still suitable for aquaculture.

Jacinto added that the safety of the seafood produced for human consumption is, however, another issue.

A serious dilemma

JACINTO said that being filter-feeders, oysters and mussels have environmental benefits as they can actually help reduce water pollution.

"But, there's a chance that too much pollution will eventually cause oysters and mussels to die. If that happens, it only means that the water is no longer fit for aquaculture," he said on the sidelines of the Science Policy and Information Forum on the Sustainability of Manila Bay last May.

In Bacoor



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last May

In Bacoor, the situation was aggravated by the Cavite Coastal Road Extension project, which directly affected the Bacoor shoreline.

Its construction in 2011 has since deprived the town's shell and shellfish gatherers of their primary source of income and livelihood.

"Before, there was the *halaan* all over the shores of Bacoor. Women and children pick them up. But because of the Manila-Cavite Expressway project, it's all gone," National Federation of Small Fishermen's Organization in the Philippines (Pamalakaya) Chairman Fernando Hicap said.

Hicap said while already experiencing economic hardships with the Cavitex project, fishermen and players in Bacoor's mussel farming sector are facing yet another major threat that can eventually wipe out oysters and mussel farms and displace hundreds, if not thousands, of coastal families.

Yonder and here

THE city of Bacoor has a land-reclamation application filed at the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), which has been empowered by President Duterte to decide on the fate of these land-reclamation projects after he signed Executive Order 74 on February 4.

EO 74 repealed EO 798 s. 2009 and EO 145 s. of 2013, and subsequently transferring the PRA to the Office of the President. The order also delegated to the PRA Governing Board the power of the President to approve reclamation projects.

The application for the P42-billion Bacoor Reclamation and Development Project will involve dump-and-fill activities that will expand the city's land territory over a 320-hectare coastal area as part of the plan to erect a commercial and business district in Manila Bay.

The project is expected to lure investors, create jobs and livelihood opportunities and, hence, generating more revenues for the city.

Aquatic Resource Management Council of Bacoor (CFARMC) and Mayor Lani Mercado-Revilla intend to transfer would-be affected farms through re-zoning in other locations so as not to affect the city's oyster and mussel production capacity.

Chua added he will also propose that the CFARMC come up with a resolution designating what remains of Bacoor's coastal waters for aquaculture production.

As for the coastal families, he said they will have to be relocated as part of the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay where informal-settler families would be moved away from so-called danger zones.

Getting relocated

THE relocation of informal settler families, Chua said, is inevitable because it is part of the rehabilitation of Manila Bay as ordered by the Manila Bay Task Force.

"Those who will be affected will be transferred to a relocation site—a Fisherman's Village to be constructed within Bacoor," he added.

Informal settler families from the city's coastal areas—such as those victimized by fire and those affected by flooding—have agreed to transfer to a government relocation site, he said.

According to Chua, residents are supportive of the land-reclamation project and the actress-turned politician's development agenda for Bacoor.

"Some residents have even agreed and started to transfer to a relocation site of the NHA [National Housing Authority] in Naic, Cavite," he said.

There are more than 20 other proposed land-reclamation projects application filed before the PRA that are in various stages of development.

While the PRA is the sole authority with the power to approve or reject land-reclamation projects, the DENR is not keen on releasing the Environmental Clearance Certificate or Area Clearance for Manila Bay land-reclamation projects.



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for the city.

The project, however, will directly affect over a hundred fishermen and mussel farm operators, including informal-settler families who would have to be relocated should the project push through.

A document acquired from the DENR said the proposed project will include five reclaimed areas, four inland reclamation islands behind Cavite with an aggregate area of 90 hectares and one outer island north of Cavite with an area of 230 hectares.

Last year the DENR conducted the "public scoping" to get inputs from would-be affected communities.

Uprooted, unemployed

ALLAN GUEVARRA CHUA, Bacoor City Agriculture officer-in-charge, told the BUSINESSMIRROR "the land-reclamation project, if it pushes through, will cover a total of 320 hectares of coastal and marine areas, of which 100 to 150 hectares of oyster and mussel farms will have to go."

With 150 hectares of oyster and mussel farms to be affected by the land-reclamation project, around 1,000 individuals stand to lose employment.

Nevertheless, Chua is optimistic that Bacoor City will retain its identity as one of the major producers of oysters and mussels in Luzon.

He said the City Fisheries

reclamation project.

A steady increase

THE Bacoor's oyster and mussel farming sector mirrors a situation across the country: the Philippines is already a major exporter of fish and other seafood.

Oyster and mussel production in the Philippines, however, remains small despite its vast potential, yet a steady increase is observed in areas where mussel farms are on the rise.

According to the BFAR, the volume of mussel production in 2018 was estimated at 26.30 thousand metric tons, 36.93 percent higher from 2017 level of 19.21 thousand metric tons.

The growth has been observed for the past three years.

The top mussel-producing regions were Western Visayas, Region 4A and Eastern Visayas with a combined share of 93 percent.

While Bacoor is now a bustling city, it remains a major producer of oysters and mussels.

Given the much-needed shot in the arm, a boost from the BFAR and Bacoor LGU, the oyster and mussel industry can help sustain the city's growth and development. Doing so also means continuously employing thousands of marginalized women who have been empowered by its small mussel farming sector that Bacoor is known for.

Aquatic Resource



The fishkill phenomenon

By MACRINA TAMAYO-ZAFARALLA

Fishkill or fishes dying all at once in great numbers recently struck Taal Lake, which did not escape media headlines last May 31.

One of the reasons for fishkill is linked to climatic conditions where weather effects in a locality like the Taal Lake region result in water conditions that are inimical to fish.

In 2014, the report of a multidisciplinary group of scientists under the research program Fishkill Early Warning System (FEWS) financed by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development, established from data produced by Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources from 1989 to 2011, stated fishkill in Taal Lake generally occurred between the 18th to the 35th week of the year.

Furthermore, fishkill occurrences showed that *hibay* (erratic swimming behavior) and *gataw* (gasping for air at water's surface followed by possible death) in fish began with low incidence in early May and reached peak by month's end.

PAGASA data showed this is the time when wind shifts direction owing to the southwest monsoon (*habagat*) taking over the northeast monsoon (*amihan*), the period described as intermonsoon (March to May). The cool northeast monsoon occurs from December to March, while southwest monsoon is from June to September.

A graph of the shifting wind direction within the 22-year period showed that when strength of this wind-shift blows to its first peak, there occurs a slowing down of velocity. This means the lake becomes calmer, and less waves mean less incorporation of oxygen coming from the air. Warm air in the summer months increases lake water temperature, in turn lowering the water's capacity to take in oxygen.

Inside overstocked fish cages, oxygen supply is lessened by the heat and calmer water. Fish then have less air to breathe and gradually manifest *hibay*, then *gataw*, until they die floating at the surface with bloated stomach.

Since fishes die almost at the same time in great numbers, the phenomenon is called fishkill. Asphyxiation or lack of oxygen is

often indicated as the cause of fishkill, but this may also be combined with toxicity.

Fishkill – May connection

Lake waters warmed by solar radiation in the summer months influence the rapid decay of organic matter courtesy of bacteria and fungi agents. When exposed to warmer temperature, these organisms tend to become more active in the decay process.

The most important organic substrates for decomposition are the feces of fish, the unconsumed supplementary fish feeds, dead algae (phytoplankton), zooplankton and other organics that people deliberately dump into the lake. Air-requiring or aerobic microorganisms are first to get to work in the organic decomposition process.

This biological process puts microorganisms in competition with fish for the oxygen dissolved in water. The fish whose physiology is adversely affected by lower oxygen are further put at a disadvantage by these competitors through the products of decay in the aerobic environment, namely: carbon dioxide, sulfate, nitrate and phosphate. As oxygen gets depleted, anaerobic (not oxygen-requiring) decomposition sets in to replace the aerobic process.

Anaerobic decomposition results in the production of carbon monoxide instead of carbon dioxide, and in the release of methane, ammonia, hydrogen sulfide and phosphine – all poisonous to fish. On land the odor produced is awful. In water the foul odor is dominated by the smell of sulfur. Conditions in this oxygen-depleted environment are made doubly lethal by the toxicants. Consequently fish succumb to *gataw* where they float to the surface gasping for air, until in a few minutes, they die en masse.

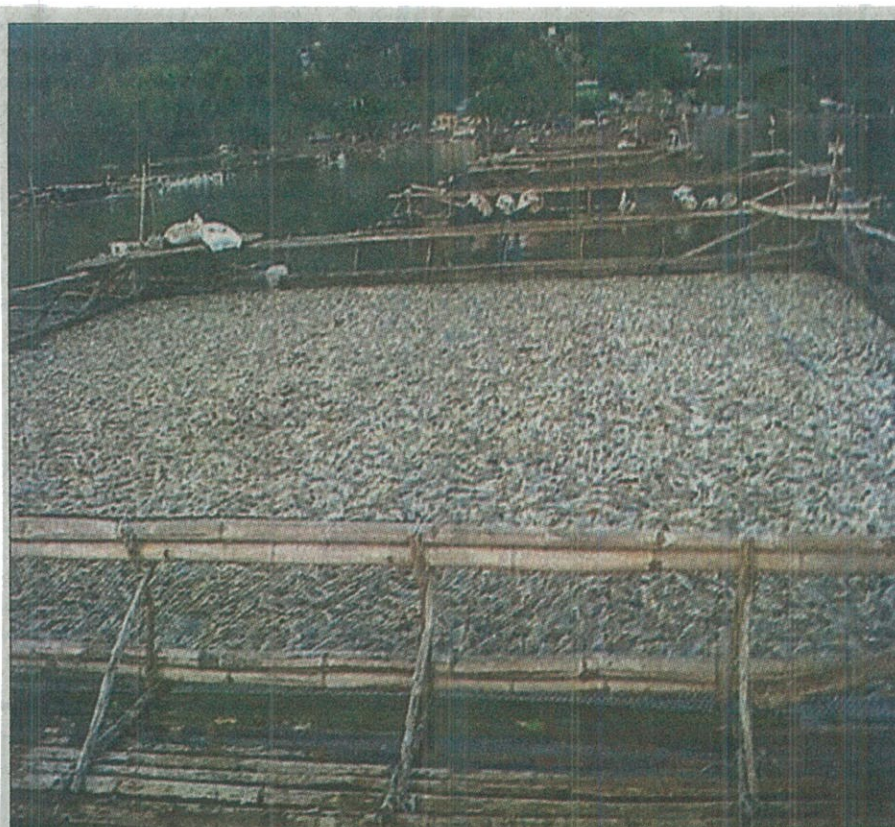
Lake management and law implementation

Taal Lake is a resource that is grimly in need of improved management and implementation of existing laws. The mayors of lake-shore localities, and the big-time

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Fishkill is seen inside a fish cage in Taal Lake. Asphyxiation coupled with toxicity are the main causes of fishkill in the summer month of May. MT ZAFARALLA

fish cage owners are all involved in the regular meetings called by lake management, the Protected Area Management Board-Taal Lake Protected Landscape. Some of them were also involved in drafting the section on the Unified Rules and Regulations for Fisheries.

In such meetings the optimum stocking density, or what we call the "biological red line" is discussed lengthily then decided on by a confluence of opinions in accord with advice from BFAR and academe.

But sometimes, the lure of higher profits takes the upper hand and fish cage operators experiment on the recommended stocking density to test if a little more would not do any harm. The consequences of such experimentation are there to see but apparently, to the fish cage owners, the risk is worth taking.

And so, a fishkill phenomenon puts to task the fish cage operators in loading tons of dead fish into their burial grounds.

Lessons from Laguna de Bay

The country's experience in Laguna de Bay provides some lessons from which to address lake management. The biological red line had been exceeded in that 90,000-hectare

lake, the largest in the Philippines.

Laguna de Bay suffers due to many factors that caused it to "age" rapidly, and continues to do so. High soil erosion that led to a high siltation rate has deposited sediments that reach up to three meters thick. In such environment, the generated waste load exacerbated by humans could not be effectively degraded. Fish productivity is thus diminished and fish quality is downgraded.

After its heyday in the 70s to the early 80s, Laguna de Bay now presents a window to the possible aftermath of a neglected lake. It would be to the best interest of all concerned that we opt not for a high profit in the short term, but for a sustainably moderate, but long lasting profit in the long-term.

It would be for the good of the people and the natural resource like Taal Lake that people participate in lake protection and conservation, because good stewardship of a natural resource is a collective responsibility.

The author is a doctor of philosophy and professor emeritus of Environmental Science in UP Los Baños. Her research on fishkill in Taal Lake has led to work on the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded streams.



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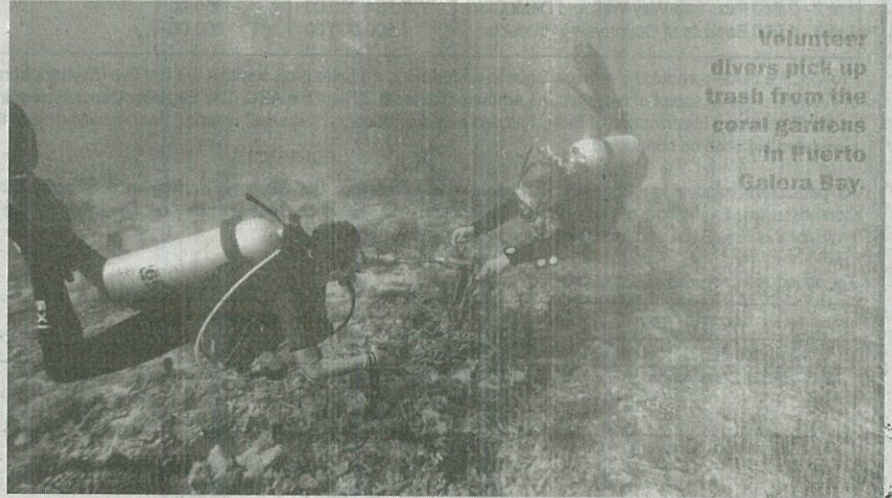
Cleaner seas for Puerto Galera

Puerto Galera, one of the country's top diving spots, can expect to have cleaner seas and a more balanced marine ecosystem with the recent partnership sealed by the municipal government and the Metro Pacific Investments Foundation Inc.

The CSR arm of the MVP Group of Companies, the foundation has committed P1.5 million for three years under its 'Shore It Up' program to provide local Bantay Dagat in the form of technical knowhow, monthly allowances, uniforms, and scuba diving courses and equipment to better protect and conserve the town's aquatic resources.

To be called Marine Protection, Inspection and Conservation Guardians, the volunteers will also be empowered by the municipal government in their marine enforcement and monitoring activities.

The conglomerate made its initial foray into Puerto Galera in 2010 when it pioneered a comprehensive underwater and coastal cleanup drive, followed up in 2013 by another scuba cleanup and the Junior Environmental Scouts, an



Volunteer divers pick up trash from the coral gardens in Puerto Galera Bay.

education component for public school children.

The recent Shore It Up drew 145 volunteer scuba divers who collected 616 kgs of garbage from various dive spots, while residents conducted a parallel cleanup in the coastal barangays.

Started in 2009, the program has gathered over 85,000 volunteers from the Metro Pacific firms, national government agencies, LGUs, law enforce-

ment agencies, civil society groups, dive industry stakeholders, and public elementary schools.

A multi-awarded CSR program both here and abroad, Shore It Up has been held in key coastal areas such as Mabini (Batangas), Alaminos City (Pangasinan), Del Carmen (Surigao del Norte), Medina (Misamis Oriental), Panglao (Bohol), Cordova (Cebu), and Subic Bay.



Civil society urges rethink of climate talk into action

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Two major civil society networks in the country have urged the government to rethink its strategy on how to move the climate talks toward concrete action.

This developed after Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. announced on Twitter that the agency will no longer send participants to climate change dialogues abroad. Instead the country will "just vote yes

to any radical proposals."

Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. (PMPI) national coordinator Yolanda Esguerra said this move "is not going to help the big emitters change their game toward more favorable actions for affected countries."

Meanwhile, Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNet-Phils) lead convener Loreine dela Cruz expressed surprise, considering the wins and the coming together

of all government agencies along with civil society organizations and private sector in the last "Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction" held in Geneva last May.

"The participation of the government in climate talks and the inclusion of this in their programming is even more important now more than ever, the Philippines being one of the most vulnerable and in the frontline affected by climate impacts," Dela Cruz said in a statement.

She added that in the global level, the Philippine delegation has always been proactive in disaster risk reduction and climate change initiatives, having two laws that support participatory process and localized actions as response to the country's vulnerability in both climate and weather related hazards.

Esguerra said civil society organizations (CSOs) are always active in advocating climate targets in the global arena, with the Philippines being one of the signatories of the Paris Agreement.

But the support of government in global dialogues has always been seen as a strong point in these negotiations.

"The progress in these dialogues has been slow, but reducing the pressure by not attending will not direct these talks into action. We support the Climate Change Commission and CSOs on maintaining our stand that we have no other option but to act and continue with our global participation," Esguerra added.

DRRNetPhils is a national formation of civil society organizations, people's organizations, practitioners and advocates adhering to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and implementing community-based disaster risk reduction and management. The network represents CSOs in the national DRRM council.

PMPI is a social development and advocacy network of 250 plus faith-based groups, non-governmental and people's organizations spread all over the country, in partnership with Misereor, a social development arm of German bishops based in Aachen, Germany.



'Asean must invest in green infrastructure'

By HELEN FLORES

BANGKOK – Countries in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, must scale up investments on green infrastructure and create long-term policies if they want to succeed in their shift to cleaner energy in the future, according to climate and energy policy experts.

"The winners are the ones who embrace the change and see the opportunities, and the ones who resist the change are the ones in the losing end," said Isabelle de Lovinfosse, a low carbon energy policy expert based in Singapore.

Lovinfosse said the energy sector contributes about two-thirds of greenhouse gas emissions globally.

She said climate change, which is driven by the rise of greenhouse emissions, is a "massive problem" and "inevitable."

"For me, the energy sector is definitely the space for transformation... it is also where you have substantial potential to do it (reduce emission)," the expert said.

Lovinfosse said countries must source up to 86 percent of electricity from renewable sources from the current 24 percent by 2050 to meet the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s target of limiting global warming to "well below" two degrees Celsius by 2100.

"It would not just require renewable sources but also enabling green infrastructures, including storage and charging for transports like EVs (electric vehicles). So it requires also a change in infrastructure in addition to the change of producing energy," she said.

In the Philippines, renewable energy resources – which include geothermal, hydropower, biomass, solar and wind – accounted for 25 percent of its power generation mix in 2017.

Industry players, however, said several provisions of the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 have not yet been fully implemented and has slowed the pace of renewable energy developments in the Philippines.

Kavita Sinha, regional director for the South and East Asia International Forum for Energy of the European Climate Foundation, said the Philippine government must provide long-term policies that would entice more investors to fund renewable energy projects in the country.

"The political story of the Philippines is that the old policies they keep to an end but it wasn't replaced by another policy, so there's a policy gap. And in finance, especially when you're investing in technology or projects that have a life span of 30 to 40 years, you want visibility of policy for that same period. You know having policies for five years doesn't help in building their confidence in making an investment so that's the gap," Sinha said.

The other barrier in promoting renewable energy in the Philippines, she said, is the hidden subsidy provided by the government to fossil fuel industry.

"The second big gap is the hidden subsidies on the fossil fuel industry because all fuel costs and everything is a pass-through, which means in the profits of private there are the risks of public consumers paying for the risks of the fossil fuel industry," Sinha said.

"Even though the frontline stories is that it (Philippines) is technology-neutral, it is actually not," she added.



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Eagle can compete head on vs imported cement

EAGLE Cement Corp., the cement firm led by the family of Ramon S. Ang, said it can compete head on with imported cement products, which already corners more than a third of the market.

Ang, the company's chairman, said it targets to sell between 5 million and 6 million this year, which represents about 14 percent of the entire Philippine market.

"Eagle is very competitive against imported cement. Eagle is not afraid of imported cement because Eagle has a very modern and most efficient cement plant. We are not worried about imported cement," Ang said

at the sidelines of the company's stockholders' meeting.

"Imported cement has taken so much of the industry. It's now 35 percent to 40 percent of the industry consumption," he said.

Ang is also president and COO of San Miguel Corp., but Eagle is not part of the conglomerate. Ang said the company can reach that volume of production all coming from its existing lines, mostly in Bulacan.

Its Cebu line, meanwhile, is facing a delay of more than six months due to issues on permits.

Paul Ang, the company's presi-

dent, said it is moving by at least six months of the opening of its fourth line, located in Malabuyoc, Cebu, after the facility's construction experienced delay in securing permits. This included a Special Use Agreement in Protected Areas permit needed to construct the port. Ang said it will be completed in 2021 instead of next year.

"From 2.6 million metric tons of cement with our first integrated production line in 2010, to 7.1 million metric tons at the end of 2018—we have almost tripled our total annual cement capacity over a period of eight years. From 2010

to date, we have completed three integrated production lines," he said in his speech during the stockholders' meeting.



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San Miguel Corporation's Limay CFB (Circulating Fluidized Bed) power plant undergoes daily emission testing. Average results for the week show its emissions are way below Department of Environment and Natural Resources and World Bank limits

