

DATE : 13 JUL 2019

DAY : Saturday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## 'Unite to fight invasive alien species in PH'

By Rio N. Araja

SECRETARY Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Friday called for convergence to fight invasive alien species in Asia-Pacific region.

He urged experts and researchers to work together and come up with research-based solutions that would reduce the negative impact of invasive alien species to biodiversity and the environment in general.

"I stand firm in promoting convergence of our research and development efforts for a sustainable region-wide management of invasive alien species," he said.

"Let us continue with our pursuit for research-driven strategies and policies to effectively manage and conserve biodiversity for the good of humankind," he added.

In a recent international conference on invasive alien species management in Manila, DENR underscored the need for a collective effort to tackle the invasive alien species that has been "invading and destroying nature's ecological balance."

"These invasive alien species pose serious environmental concerns and are among the major threats to biodiversity," Cimatu said.

"They cover a wide gamut of ecosystems from the terrestrial to aquatic environments, irreversibly impacting on biodiversity, agriculture as well as food and water security," he noted.

Invasive alien species are plants, animals, pathogens and other organisms that are non-native to an ecosystem, and which may cause economic or environmental harm or adversely affect human health.



## Fight vs invasive 'aliens'

**EXPERTS and researchers in the Asia-Pacific region have converged in the Philippines to fight invasive alien species (IAS) which are posing serious environmental concerns to humankind.**

In welcoming the delegates, Environmental Secretary Roy Cimatu emphasized the need for these regions to work together and come up with solutions that would reduce the negative impact of these species to biodiversity and the environment in general. IAS are plants, animals,

pathogens and other organisms that are non-native to an ecosystem, and which may cause economic or environmental harm to human health.

Among the most infamous IAS in the Philippines are the American bullfrog and the golden apple snail or golden kuhol, which have displaced indigenous species in natural habitats.

The international conference on IAS management took place in Manila from July 9-11.

"I stand firm in promot-

ing convergence of our research and development (R&D) efforts for a sustainable region-wide management of (IAS)," Cimatu said.

The three-day event brought together experts, researchers, dialogue partners, environment managers and other stakeholders from the Asia-Pacific region.

"Let us continue with our pursuit for research-driven strategies and policies to effectively manage and conserve biodiversity for the good of humankind," he added.

**Joel dela Torre**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

THE EXPONENTIAL OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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## Leave endangered turtles alone, fishermen urged

By **CALVIN CORDOVA**

**CEBU CITY** – The Department Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is appealing to fishermen in Central Visayas not to catch marine turtles which are considered endangered.

Shelumiel Purisima, wildlife enforcement officer of DENR in the region, made the call after the DENR released a 40-year-old sea turtle Friday in Lapu-Lapu City.

"The turtle was found by divers and was turned over to us," Purisima said.

Last Thursday, department personnel found a dead green sea turtle in Cordova town.

"Marine turtles are breathing reptiles. It was possible that when it tried

to go up to breathe, it got strangled in a fishing net and drowned," said Purisima.

The country is home to five species of marine turtles. One of them is considered critically endangered while the other four are endangered.

"They can live up to 100 years and they play a huge role in biodiversity," said Purisima.

Marine sea turtles thrive in Lapu-Lapu waters because of its vast sea grasses, the DENR officer said.

Last Saturday, three fishermen were arrested after they were caught catching marine turtles.

"Fishermen should avoid catching marine turtles because the DENR 7 has intensified its intelligence monitoring," said Purisima.



## 87% of Filipinos say gov't should assert right to West PH Sea – SWS

Nine out of 10 or majority of Filipinos believe it is important for the government to assert its right to the islands in the West Philippine Sea, a Social Weather Stations survey showed.

In the special survey conducted from June 22 to 26, 1,200 respondents were asked about their opinion on the statement: "The Philippine government should assert its right to the islands in the West Philippine Sea as stipulated in the 2016 decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration."

Eighty-seven percent of Filipinos agreed (59 percent agree, 28 percent somewhat agree), five percent disagreed (two percent strongly disagree, three percent somewhat agree), and nine per-

cent were undecided.

During the survey period, SWS also asked the statement: "The government should arrest and prosecute Chinese fishermen causing the destruction of marine resources in the West Philippine Sea."

Eight-seven percent agreed (63 percent strongly agree, 24 percent somewhat agree), five percent disagreed (two percent strongly disagree, three percent somewhat disagree), and eight percent were undecided.

Another questions posed to the respondents: "How serious is the government in protecting the safety of Filipino fishermen in the West Philippine Sea against foreign vessels that threaten their

security?"

Seventy-one percent said the government is serious (35 percent very serious, 36 percent somewhat serious), 15 percent said it is not serious (six percent very serious, nine percent somewhat serious), and 14 percent were undecided.

The SWS two days earlier released the result of a survey that asked about Filipinos' opinion on how important the control of the islands that China currently occupies in the West Philippine Sea be given back to the Philippines.

Ninety-three percent of the respondents said it is important that the Philippines regain control of the islands occupied by China in the West Philippine Sea. **(Ellalyn Ruiz)**



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**COMMENTARY**

ED GARCIA AND FLORIN T. HILBAY

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# Uphold the 1987 Constitution

**N**ever in the history of our country has a President disrespected the Philippine Constitution in a manner so shameful and shocking.

Words do matter, and President Duterte's depiction of the fundamental law of the land as worthless in the face of foreign power betrays a defeatist attitude that accepts the logic of the lawless that might is right. This is both inexcusable and unforgivable.

The President has undermined our citizens' faith in our Constitution, the bedrock of our democracy and our democratic institutions. He has compromised the rule of law. He has betrayed the public trust.

Take these instances of the President's abdication of his responsibility to protect the interests of our people:

**Failure to advance our 2016 victory in Philippines versus China.** On July 12, 2016, we won a landmark ruling under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea upholding our exclusive rights over Philippine waters against China's all-encompassing and illegal "nine-dash line" doctrine. The Duterte administration, by its words and actions, has miserably failed to advance the gains we achieved in that historic victory. Worse, it has in fact undermined that victory by failing to protect our fisherfolk, marine resources and national territory.

**Inability to implement the Philippine fisheries law.** The executive department demonstrated its inability to implement our laws by refusing to take action as required by Republic Act No. 8550, as amended by RA 10654, or the Philippine fisheries law. We have an existing legal framework creating rights and responsibilities that mandate every administration to protect and police our waters and punish violators, particularly those who transgress our borders. Yet, the Duterte administration has either refused to implement our own laws or been remiss in its duties. Instead of a robust diplomatic initiative, this administration has sold our interests short by strangely invoking China's nuclear capability as its rationale for its policy of submission and inaction. Its inability to protect 22 Filipinos in Recto Bank endangers all Filipino fisherfolk.

**Entering into an agreement over the country's marine wealth with another country without notifying Congress.** The President demonstrated his disdain for our Constitution by invoking a supposed verbal agreement with China as justification for allowing Chinese fishermen to poach in our waters, in violation of Article XII of our Constitution (National Economy and Patrimony) and the treaty powers of Congress.

**WE HAVE AN EXISTING LEGAL FRAMEWORK CREATING RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MANDATE EVERY ADMINISTRATION TO PROTECT AND POLICE OUR WATERS AND PUNISH VIOLATORS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO TRANSGRESS OUR BORDERS. YET, THE DUTERTE ADMINISTRATION HAS EITHER REFUSED TO IMPLEMENT OUR OWN LAWS OR BEEN REMISS IN ITS DUTIES**

my and Patrimony) and the treaty powers of Congress.



# Uphold the 1987 Constitution

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Article VII, Section 21 states: "No treaty or international agreement shall be valid and effective unless concurred in by at least two-thirds of all the Members of the Senate."

The Constitution is clear, and both the President and his spokespersons have tied themselves in knots explaining away their rationale for allowing China to fish in Philippine waters. Their argument that the agreement is "verbal yet binding" is patently incompatible with our Constitution.

This illegal and unfair bargain threatens our territory and goes against the Constitution's policy to promote an independent foreign policy.

**Betrayal of public trust.** The President, more pointedly, has betrayed public trust by not protecting the country's marine wealth for the exclusive use of Filipinos, as mandated by our Constitution.

Our scientists from the UP Marine Science Institute has warned that the West Philippine Sea, which covers 40 percent of our exclusive economic zone, is vital to our economic, ecological and food security. Our short- and long-term national interest requires that we protect the marine life in our waters and conserve their habitat and ecosystem. Irresponsible inaction undermines our capacity to exercise responsible stewardship over these resources, to the detriment of the rights of future generations of Filipinos.

The pattern, method and unrestrained ways of fishing and exploitation exercised by China in our waters has, according to the Marine Science Institute, caused severe damage to the complex marine biodiversity in our waters. This was the same finding of the arbitral tribunal at The Hague that awarded us the victory in 2016. Our scientists have noted the continued "decline in the country's fisheries output." This drain on our marine resources threatens the country's food security. The government's policy to set aside our legal rights is an abdication of its responsibility to protect our marine resources.

Finally, Article XI of the Constitution (Accountability of Public Officers) gives Filipinos and their representatives the right to file a verified complaint for impeachment. The President's threat, whether real or a bluff, to jail those who attempt to impeach him is an illegal impediment to the exercise of constitutional rights, and sends a chilling effect that compounds the climate of fear already experienced by our citizens.

Ed Garcia is one of the framers of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Florin T. Hilbay, former Solicitor General and agent of the Philippine Republic in *Philippines v. China*, taught Constitutional Law at UP Law.



**PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION RULING**

# OPPOSITION HITS DU30 ADMINISTRATION FOR DEFAULTING ON PH VICTORY IN HAGUE

**By Julie M. Aurelio**  
@JMAurelioINQ

Opposition lawmakers on Friday slammed the Duterte administration for its “selective sovereignty” and for “defaulting” on the country’s victory three years ago on its claims in the West Philippine Sea. //

Sen. Risa Hontiveros expressed disappointment about how the government “continues to bow to China” even with the 2016 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) that favored the Philippines’ claims.

“It has been three years since our historic victory at The Hague. And for three years this government has defaulted on that victo-

ry,” she said in a statement.

“This government’s brand of selective sovereignty is on full display,” Hontiveros said.

### Landmark ruling

Hontiveros made the remarks as the country observed the third anniversary of the landmark PCA ruling that invalidated Beijing’s expansive claims in the South China Sea.

She pointed out that “whenever the international community holds the Duterte government accountable for the human rights abuses under its watch, it falsely invokes sovereignty to avoid them.”

“But when an actual issue of sovereign rights and territorial

defense is literally at our shores, it is as silent as a watery grave,” she said.

Hontiveros accused President Duterte of refusing to find ways to stop the harassment of Filipino fishermen and the destruction of marine resources, choosing instead to “kowtow to the Chinese government’s agenda in the region.”

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said China became more aggressive in the South China Sea when the Philippines “pivoted” toward China, seemingly giving the ruling to the aggressor.

Pangilinan cited the June 9 Recto Bank incident as the latest example of China’s “bullying” in the disputed waters.

Pangilinan said it was the Philippine government’s responsibility to uphold the 2016 PCA ruling and protect the country’s territory.

He pointed out that the Philippines stands to gain “cheaper power and electricity, as well as seafood, for our consumers, and more income and food for our fisher folk” if it could harness the oil and gas and protect marine resources in the West Philippine Sea.

### De Lima urges unity

For her part, detained Sen. Leila de Lima urged Filipinos to unite in the face of a pro-China government.

“In a time that our national

dignity is being stepped upon, where foreigners rob us of our livelihood and where our countrymen are left to die, in a time where the President and his allies are pro-China rather than pro-Filipino, we must stand together as a united nation,” she said.

Hontiveros also called for the government not to allow Filipino fishermen to fend for themselves and to stop the exploitation of the country’s marine resources.

“We reject the false choice that the only options we have are silence or war. And I call upon this government to work with other nations in the region to stem the tide of Chinese aggression,” she said.

But Malacañang has denied allegations that President Duterte was subservient to China’s interests in the territorial dispute over the South China Sea.

“The President is not subservient to China. He is subservient to the interests of the Filipino people,” said presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo in an interview over ANC.

“The President is precisely enforcing that [constitutional] provision on protecting and serving the people,” he added.

Panelo reiterated the Palace’s previous stance that China is in possession of the disputed waters and that the Philippines could never win in a war over its claims. INQ



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# Sea row: Most Filipinos want PH to assert The Hague ruling

ALMOST 9 of 10 Filipinos agree that the Philippine government should assert the rights it garnered from the 2016 decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration to islands in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea), according to a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey.

The SWS survey, conducted from June 22 to 26, 2019, found that 87 percent agreed on the stance that the Philippines should take as a result of the arbitral ruling.

Only 5 percent disagreed, while 9 percent were undecided.

The survey was released on July 12, three years after the Philippines won its maritime case against China over the West Philippine Sea.

The ruling trashed China's "nine-dash

➤ **Ruling A2**



**UPHOLDING VICTORY** As the Philippines marked the third anniversary of its landmark victory at The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration invalidating China's claim to the South China Sea, a protester holds a banner asserting the country's rights over the territory. PHOTO BY ENRIQUE AGCAOILI

■ **RULING FROM A1**

## Sea row: Most Filipinos

claim" to the entire WPS, granting the Philippines sovereignty over parts of the disputed waters.

It also declared that Filipino fishermen should enjoy fishing rights at the Panatag Shoal and that the Spratly Islands, as well as the Panganiban (Mischief) Reef, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and Recto Bank are all within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines.

Since his presidency, Rodrigo Duterte has taken a visibly softer stand in the row with China compared to his predecessor, Benigno Aquino 3rd.

Later, however, Duterte decided to set aside the victory and said he would only assert the ruling at one point during his term.

The same SWS survey also found that the same number of Filipinos want Chinese fishermen who destroy marine resources to be arrested.

Five percent disagreed, while the remaining 8 percent were undecided.

The survey found, too, that 71 percent of Filipinos believe that the government is serious in protecting the safety of Filipino fisher-

men in the West Philippine Sea.

Fifteen percent said the government was not serious, while the remaining 15 percent, completely rounded, were undecided.

The survey was conducted among 1,200 Filipinos aged 18 years and above.

It had sampling error margins of ±3 percent for national percentages and ±6 percent each for Metro Manila, Balance of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The survey came roughly a month after 22 Filipino fishermen were abandoned at the West Philippine Sea after a Chinese vessel rammed their fishing boat.

The Filipinos were saved by Vietnamese fishermen.

Duterte drew the ire of the opposition after dismissing it as a "little maritime accident."

He said he would not ask Chinese fishermen not to fish in the Philippine exclusive economic zone because "we are friends."

The Duterte administration, according to Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, has done "absolutely nothing" in enforcing the arbitral award.

"A claim that enforcing the arbitral

award means going to war with China, a war that the Philippines will surely lose, is an utterly false claim designed to intimidate the Filipino people to submit to the will of China," Carpio, along with former Foreign Affairs secretary Albert del Rosario, said on Friday in a speech at the Albert del Rosario Institute Stratebase forum on the West Philippine Sea in Taguig City.

He added that going to war with China violates provisions of the 1935, 1937 and 1987 Constitutions.

Declaring a war with China, Carpio said, also violates international laws under the United Nations charter, and any act of aggression will hold leaders of aggressor states liable as indicated under the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court (ICC).

He explained that the act of aggression may be referred by the UN Security Council to the ICC, which can assume jurisdiction over a state, regardless if that nation withdrew itself as signatory to the Rome Statute.

Manila's withdrawal from the ICC took effect in March this year, even when the Philippines was part of the drafters of the Rome Statute that was adopted in 1988.

Malacanang spokesman Salvador Panelo even insisted that the

country was "never" a part of the Rome Statute.

"It is obvious that the only purpose of raising a specter of war is to scare the Filipino people to submit to China," Carpio said.

Del Rosario, meanwhile, pointed out that the Philippine government under Duterte has "persisted" in allowing Beijing to "deprive" Filipinos of what the country owns by continuing to shelve the arbitral ruling.

"We are still succumbing to threats of force including a threat of war," he said in a separate speech.

The former chief diplomat cited Amitav Acharya of the American University, who said sparking a war would also be inconvenient for China.

"[China's] economy is heavily reliant on global trade, including its fuel supply, which needs open shipping lanes such as the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean which are dominated by the United States' naval power," del Rosario said.

"With the recent clearer security guarantee definition provided by the US, it may not be necessary therefore to shrink to China's threat of war," he added.

**RALPH U. VILLANUEVA AND DEMPSEY REYES**



# IBP defends members in kalikasan petition

By **Dona Z. Pazzibugan**  
@dpazzibuganINQ

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) vouched for the integrity of the lawyers who helped a group of fishermen in Palawan and Zambales provinces in asking the Supreme Court to order the government to protect them against China's incursion into Philippine waters and the resulting environmental destruction in the West Philippine Sea.

The IBP counsels, led by human rights lawyer Chel Diokno, were caught flat-footed during oral arguments on July 9 when Solicitor General Jose Calida cited sworn statements from 19 of the fishermen disavowing the petition for a writ of kalikasan that was filed on their behalf in April.

## Proceedings suspended

The Supreme Court suspended further proceedings and gave both sides until this week to state their next legal move.

Malacañang on Thursday accused Diokno of manipulating the fishermen into making the petition, which would have the effect of compelling the



Domingo Cayosa —IBP.PH

government to enforce the 2016 arbitral court ruling against China's claim over the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the West Philippine Sea.

## Full consent, knowledge

Diokno, on the other hand, maintained that the fishermen petitioned for a writ of kalikasan "with full knowledge and consent, because all they want is to fish in our own seas and to earn enough to support their families."

He accused the government of committing a breach of legal ethics for having a Philippine Navy lawyer "secretly talk" to their clients.

In a statement on Friday, IBP national president Domingo Cayosa said the organization "stands firmly with the fishermen, IBP chapters and the lawyers involved in the petition for a writ of kalikasan filed before the Supreme Court."

Cayosa added that the IBP "advocates for the enforcement of environmental laws, protection of the rights and welfare of fisherfolk, and securing the territory and patrimony of our country in the West Philippine Sea."

## Time to confer

Disputing Calida's claim that both parties will jointly ask the Supreme Court to dismiss the writ of kalikasan petition, Cayosa said the fishermen's lawyers would instead ask the tribunal for time to talk to their clients before taking their next step.

"Considering the new allegations by the Office of the Solicitor General, the handling lawyers will request the Supreme Court for time to confer with the fishermen in Zambales and in Palawan so that they can more appropriately act on the developments in the case," Cayosa said. INQ



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## IBP wants talk with fishermen

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) will ask the Supreme Court (SC) to give its lawyers time to speak with the Palawan and Zambales fishermen who earlier filed a petition to compel the government to protect the West Philippine Sea.

The development came after Solicitor General Jose Calida said that the fishermen had disowned the Writ of Kalikasan plea where they were named petitioners.

In a statement, IBP President Domingo Egon Cayosa said IBP stands firmly with the fishermen and the lawyers involved in the petition.

The IBP also said the handling lawyers will ask the Court for time to confer with the fishermen so that they can act "more appropriately" on the development in the case.

On Tuesday, Calida claimed that the 19 fishermen who were named as petitioners in the environmental suit executed an affidavit manifesting their desire to withdraw from the plea as they do not support the filing of the petition.

**In its statement, the IBP said the handling lawyers will ask the Court for time to confer with the fishermen so that they can act "more appropriately" on the development in the case.**

The submission of the fishermen's affidavit was objected by Chel Diokno, one of the fishermen's lawyers, saying the government bypassed the petitioners' lawyers by obtaining their statements, violating legal ethics.

Because of the revelation, the oral arguments in the case was suspended; Chief Justice Lucas Bersamin called the parties instead to a closed-door conference.

Calida after emerging from the meeting claimed the government and the petitioners' lawyers agreed that the case be dismissed but Diokno said they will file a joint motion updating the Court as to their next move.

Through the Writ of Kalikasan, the petitioners asked the SC to order the Duterte administration to permanently stop "neglecting the performance of their duties in violation of environmental laws" and protect the resources in Panatag Shoal, Ayungin Shoal and Panganiban Reef.

According to the petitioners, Chinese fishermen and vessels have been harvesting endangered species and using cyanide and dynamite in Panatag and Ayungin Shoals and constructing activities in Panganiban Reef.

AMurcia



## South China Sea: Freedom of navigation vs stepped-up artificial island activities

**T**HE South China Sea is a marginal sea that is part of the Pacific Ocean, encompassing an area from the Singapore and Malacca Straits to the Strait of Taiwan of around 3,500,000 square kilometers. Thousands of commercial vessels pass through the SCS carrying some \$5 trillion worth of goods a year. The center of dispute is the Spratly Islands area. China's unilaterally declared "nine-dash-line" ownership of the SCS overlaps with the competing claims of some Asian countries.

China's leaders have never been clear about the exact location of the "nine-dash-line," or about whether their claims refer only to certain land features, or also to more extensive continental shelves and seas. The usual formal answer is China inherited historical claims, including a map from the Nationalist period that sketches a "nine-dash-line" encompassing virtually the entire SCS.

Be it noted that the United States has maintained a neutral position on territorial issues in the South China Sea, including China's reclamation activities in the Spratlys which are claimed by Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan. Washington, however, has taken issue with Beijing's claims on the waters surrounding China's man-made land features in the SCS.

The US declared in 1995 and 2010 that the waters of the South China Sea should be governed by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. (The US has not ratified the Unclos.)

Against the aforementioned backdrop on tensions in the region over conflicting maritime territorial claims and China's reclamation efforts in relation to these claims, is the regular conduct of freedom of navigation operations by the US in the SCS in accordance with international law.

Pursuance of freedom of navigation (FON) by navies have occurred fairly routinely around the world in accordance with internationally recognized



AMBASSADORS'  
CORNER

AMADO S.  
TOLENTINO, JR.

systems of rules and norms. And, according to the US Navy, if there are challenges to those rules and norms, they will do the FON operations to make sure a response is made to a challenge.

Actually, the US Navy's freedom of navigation operations in the SCS are not new occurrences. Active FON operations, however, started only in 2015 after China conducted dredging and reclamation activities on a number of disputed features in areas where there are overlapping territorial claims. That was the time when China transformed the Subi Reef into an artificial island equipped with an airfield and military outposts for providing maritime security and assistance to search-and-rescue operations. Such an effort can be interpreted as a move to increase China's maritime rights in the area. However, despite operating clear of the 12 nautical mile limit of Chinese-occupied features, Washington has always maintained it does not recognize any territorial sea limit around artificially created islands.

Transformation of the Subi Reef was followed by construction in the Cuarteron Reef in 2016 where structures now consist of, among others, sensor installations and an antenna farm.

Last year, "convulsions" in the SCS revolved around China's installation of anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missiles on three outposts in the disputed SCS which poses security concerns for the entire region. Whoever traverses those areas are well within China's missile range. Additionally, the Chinese air force's nuclear-capable bombers have landed for the first time on one of the islands in the contested waters.

Simultaneous political and military posturings by territorial claimants continue in the SCS. The situation has raised

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serious concerns from Japan, India, Australia, France, the UK and the US.

Recent years have seen an Asian thrust towards strengthening national navies drawn more by the fact that the People's Liberation Army Navy of China has been rapidly increasing in size that there is no other way except for the other navies operating in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen strategic partnerships in response. Combined multinational exercises are now in place to improve professionalism, develop exchange experiences and draw lessons from fellow navies.

In early May 2019, a Philippine Navy patrol ship with US, Japan and Indian warships conducted a quadrilateral cooperative naval drill in the SCS highlighting the fact of cooperation among the four countries' navies. Likewise, countries have also committed to multilateral defense and diplomacy forums to enhance capabilities. One such is the Asean Plus Defense Ministers' Meeting (the plus being Australia, China, India, Japan South Korea, New Zealand and the US. Reportedly, Chinese Coast Guard surveillance ships were noticed shadowing the participants' vessels during the maritime capability exercise.

China's defense ministry strongly criticized extra-regional navies operating in the SCS even as it announced a series of military drills in the disputed region. "The problem is that in recent years, some countries outside the region come to the South China Sea to flex muscles in the name of freedom of navigation. The large-scale force projection and offensive operations in the region are the most destabilizing and uncertain factors in the South China Sea," said Gen. Wei Fenghe at the annual security conference known as the Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore in June.

At the same meeting, the French Navy and the UK Royal Navy expressed interest to be more involved operationally in the SCS. France even called upon fellow European coun-

tries to increase their naval presence in the Asia-Pacific region, apparently directing the comment at Beijing's significantly stepped-up artificial island-building activities in the SCS.

In fact, a report was published in the China Military Online website on April 1 to the effect that China has introduced a "new system to defend islands and reefs in the South China Sea." The report identifies two types of unmanned floating platforms that form part of an "information network node system" and are important for island reef construction and protection.

In the aftermath of the ramming of Filipino fishing boat *Gem-Ver* on June 9 (ironically, the date had been designated Filipino-Chinese Friendship Day by Presidential Proclamation 148 in 2002), within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, someone thoughtfully remarked, "Is it right for a country to claim the South China Sea?" Indeed, can one state arrogate unto itself nearly the entire marginal sea which forms part of the huge and vast Pacific Ocean?

With China rising in terms of land and naval strategy and operations, pressing on towards Asian hegemony, could there be truth to the saying that "if you want peace, prepare for war"? Too alarmist?

Be that as it may, perhaps the safest is to say, it is time for all countries to remember Winston Churchill's famous advice, "To jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war."

*A delegate to the 3rd Philippine Constitutional Convention, the author served as a member of its eight-man committee on national territory. The committee is credited for the provision which says: "The Philippine territory comprises the Philippine archipelago... and all other territories belonging to the Philippines 'by historic right or legal title,' referring to Sabah and the Kalayaan Island Group in the Spratlys. He served as Philippine ambassador to Papua New Guinea and Qatar.*

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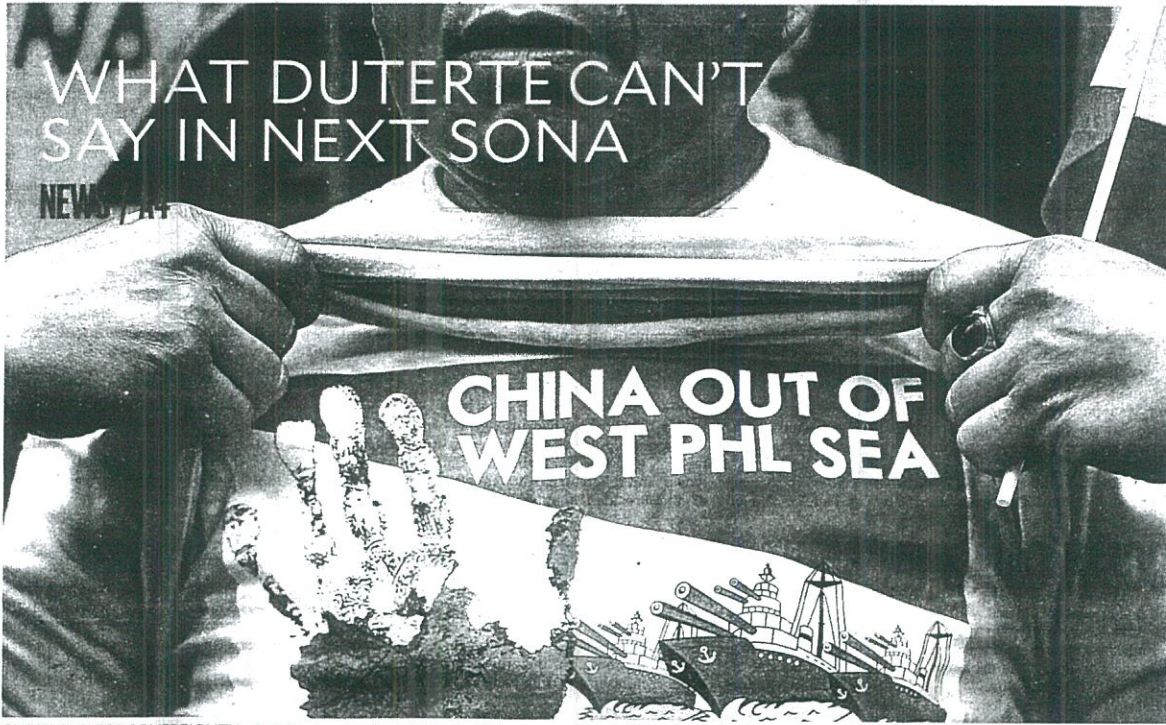
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**CHEST OUT FOR SOVEREIGNTY** A protester stands outside the Chinese consulate in Makati City during a rally on Friday marking the third anniversary of The Hague arbitral tribunal ruling that rejected Beijing's expansive claims in the South China Sea, in a landmark case brought by Manila in 2013. —LYN RILLON



**CORDILLERA OFFICIALS ADDRESS IMPLICATIONS OF CHICO IRRIGATION PROJECT**

# 'EXCLUDE ANCESTRAL LANDS FROM DEFAULT ASSETS IN CHINA LOAN DEAL'

BAGUIO CITY—Ancestral lands used for the Chico River Pump Irrigation Project must be spared from assets that could be confiscated under a China loan deal in case the country defaults in payment, members of the Cordillera Regional Development Council (RDC) said on Friday.

They met to address the implications on Kalinga communal lands of the P3.6-billion loan which the government took from the China Eximbank to finance the controversial irrigation project.

The project would draw water from the Chico River to 7,500 hectares of farms in Tuao and Pit towns in Cagayan province. Only 1,170 ha of farms in Pinukpuk town, Kalinga province, are entitled to the same service despite the fact that the river's headwaters lie in the Cordillera.

Irrigation tunnels are being put up along riverside villages in Pinukpuk by a Chinese contractor. A certificate precondition, which stipulates that ancestral domain owners have allowed the government to proceed with the project on communal property, was granted to



**LIFEGIVER** Chico River, which is being harnessed to irrigate Cagayan farms, is where people wash, frolic or fish in Mountain Province. The powerful river's headwaters are in the Cordillera. —EV ESPIRITU

the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) on May 23.

### Challenged

But the project's loan agreement had been challenged in the Supreme Court for allegedly onerous terms that would allow China to take any Philippine asset in case the government defaults in payment.

The lawsuit, filed by lawyer

Neri Colmenares and members of the Makabayan bloc in the House of Representatives, said:

"A dangerous component of the [Eximbank loan agreement] is a vaguely worded provision that does not recognize our sovereign rights and could allow China to take control of our patrimonial properties should we fail to pay the loan.

"It provides that any dispute

such as a delay or default in payment shall be resolved by the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission and shall be governed by the laws of China."

### Nontransferable

Using Colmenares' argument, China could seize any asset, including the Chico pump facility in ancestral lands in Pinukpuk,

according to Baguio-based lawyer Cheryl Daytec-Yangot, a former assistant secretary of the Department of Justice.

"Ancestral domains are collectively owned by indigenous peoples and are nontransferable," Yangot told a meeting of the RDC committees on indigenous peoples and infrastructure.

She said the government's counterargument is that the terms are no different from what a bank normally sets for potential creditors, "who may take it or leave it." She said the government has guaranteed that it could not renege on the loan.

Details about the loan and its implication on the domain were not presented to Kalinga residents when the irrigation project was first discussed with them so NIA could obtain their free, informed and prior consent, said lawyer Roland Calde, Cordillera director of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

"Issues about the loan only surfaced after Colmenares filed the case in the Supreme Court," said Calde, who chaired the meeting. —VINCENT CABREZA INQ



## Customs crooks to clean up Pasig — Rody

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

To teach them a lesson, President Duterte wants the entire administrative section he tagged for corruption activities at the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to remove the waterlilies in Pasig River.

Duterte said he would direct 64 Customs employees who are set to be sacked to gather waterlilies to allow his barge to cross smoothly from the Bahay ng Pagbabago to Malacañang.

The President uses the barge to reach the Palace

to avoid traffic on his way to work.

"Yesterday, *tinanggal ko sa trabaho ang* entire administrative section *ng* Customs (I fired the entire administrative section of Customs), 64 of them. *Sabi ko mag-report sila* (I told them to report in Malacañang)," the President said in a speech during the Thanksgiving Day for OFWs at the Lapu-Lapu Grandstand at Camp Aguinaldo last night.

BOC sources, however, said there is still no order for the relief of the 64.

"*Yang Customs na yan. Napuno na ako. Sabi ko umalis*

*kayong lahat. Ang iniwan ko lang si Jagger* (That Customs. I'm tired of it. I told them to all get out. I just left Jagger)," he said, referring to Customs chief Leonardo Guerrero.

"*May nagbulong sa akin, 'gusto mo matigil talaga ang corruption? Tanggalin mo lahat. Tinanggal ko lahat* (Someone whispered to me, 'you really want to stop corruption? Fire them all.' So I fired all of them)," the President said.

Duterte recalled that when he was mayor of Davao City, he would not hesitate to punish erring drivers and corrupt officials.





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THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF THE PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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**PROOF OF LIFE – A tilapia measuring 20.5 inches and weighing 3 kilograms was caught at Estero de San Miguel in Manila Thursday. Officials of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) see the presence of the giant fish as proof that the efforts to revive Pasig River are paying off and the river could once again support marine life. (Photo from the PRRC)**





## Swarm of jellyfish closes beach



THOUSANDS of thimble jellyfish recently swarmed a beach on Samar Island, forcing locals to close the beach to swimmers and tourists, a Yahoo News report said.

*Next page*

### Swarm...

*From A1*

A video posted by Yahoo through the In The Know channel showed the jellyfish, locally known as "baso-baso" (glass-like or cup-like), floating in clumps in shallow water.

The exact location of the beach in Samar was not specified in the video, which was captured by an underwater drone as it glided through the swarms.

The website Newsflare, which first showed the video, said the footage

was captured on July 4. It quoted the drone owner as saying: "We got out of the water when they started approaching the shore."

"I'm still trying to determine if this event is natural or anthropogenic," the filmer, who was not identified, told Newsflare.

Thimble jellyfish (*Linuche unguiculata*) is a tiny jellyfish with a straight-sided, flat-topped bell. They are the most common cause of sea bather's eruption, which is a reaction caused by the injection of juvenile jellyfish nematocysts into human skin. **Jimbo Gulle**



## SINGLE USE PLASTIC BAWAL SA SIMBAHAN

**UMAPELA** si Tagbilaran Bishop Alberto Uy sa mga mananampalataya at mga pari na iwasan na ang paggamit ng single-use plastic.

Iginiit ni Uy na mahalagang magkaisa ang mga mamamayan sa pangangalaga sa kalikasan tulad ng pag-iwas sa paggamit ng mga plastic lalo na sa mga pagtitipon ng simbahan.

Nabatid na si Uy ay magiging sigasig sa kampanya laban sa plastik bilang pakikiisa sa panawagan ng Santo Papa Francisco sa ensiklikal na Laudato.

Sinabi ni niya na pangalagaan ang kapaligiran na natatanging tahanan ng sangnilikha.

Kasama si Talibon Bishop Daniel Patrick Parcon, nanguna si Uy sa pagtatanggal ng mga tarpaulin at iba pang campaign materials ng mga politiko noong Mayo 14 bilang pagpapakita ng pagmamala-

sakit para sa kalikasan at maiwasang mapunta sa karagatan ang mga plastic waste na nalikha mula sa campaign materials.

Kaisa rin ang obispo sa panawagan ng Plastic Free Bohol Movement sa isasagawang Plastic Free July Beach Cleanup sa karagatan ng Panglao, Bohol na sisimulan ngayong araw, Hulyo 13.

Batay sa pag-aaral ng Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), halos 60 bilyong sachet ng plastik ang nalilikha sa Pilipinas bawat taon, kabilang na ang 48 milyong shopping bag na ginagamit ng mga Filipino araw-araw at 17 bilyong iba't ibang uri ng produktong plastik.

Kung magkakaisa umano ang mamamayan sa pagtaguyod ng maayos na kapaligiran, makakamtan ang malinis at ligtas na kalusugan ng lipunan na malayo sa polusyon at nakalalasong kemikal dulot ng plastik. **MACS B**



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## Strike team to stop importation of garbage

**THE Department of Finance said Sec. Carlos Dominguez III has directed Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero of the Bureau of Customs to look into the creation of a special strike team within the agency to guard against the entry of waste materials that other countries are attempting to dump in the country.**

In a statement, Dominguez issued the directive during a recent DoF Executive Committee meeting after Guerrero reported that he had called on his counterparts in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to strengthen the law enforce-

ment capabilities of the organization's member-states not only in the campaign against drug trafficking, but also in preventing the region from being a dumping ground for hazardous materials.

Guerrero said his fellow customs officials from the ASEAN member-states reacted positively to his proposal.

In response, Dominguez said: "It's time we put up something like an environmental unit in the Customs (bureau) to really act on this garbage issue."

Guerrero also told Dominguez that other ASEAN member-states have

thanked the Philippines during the 28th meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs held at the Lao Republic for setting the example in the region when President Duterte stood pat in his decision to compel Canada to immediately repatriate 69 containers of trash dumped in Manila six years ago.

After Canada failed to meet the original May 15 deadline set by President Duterte for the return of the imported wastes, the government recalled its ambassador and consuls to Canada to demonstrate its "diminished diplomatic relations" with the North American country.



## Dishonoring heroes

What good are shrines honoring the country's heroes if these are turned into dumps? The police commander in charge of Lawton, site of the Bonifacio Shrine just a stone's throw from the Manila city hall, has been sacked by the new mayor of the city. Isko Moreno ordered the relief of Lt. Rowel Robles last Wednesday after the mayor accidentally stepped on human excrement during a visit to the shrine named after revolutionary hero Andres Bonifacio.

The area around the shrine as well as Liwasang Bonifacio in front of the Central Post Office have long been favorite spots for street dwellers, vagrants and rugby sniffers. Muggings have been reported in the unlit area under the overpass beside the shrine. Lights were installed in Liwasang Bonifacio by the previous city administration, but the park continued to cry out for a cleanup.

The other day, the public saw what a good hosing down could do. Andres Bonifacio must be smiling in his grave.

### EDITORIAL

The shrine built in his honor no longer looked like "the biggest toilet" as described by Moreno. The challenge is to sustain the cleanliness and to keep the shrine and the adjacent Liwasang Bonifacio looking like a park, in one of the busiest areas in one of the most crowded cities in the country.

A bigger challenge is to maintain that level of cleanliness and safety in other shrines across the country dedicated to heroes. Shrines and parks contribute to livability in a community. These must be maintained as areas of relaxation and recreation. In crowded urban centers, they serve as patches of greenery, helping city dwellers breathe easier.

Proper maintenance is all the more important when the shrine or park is dedicated to a hero. Regular park maintenance also creates jobs for the poor. Andres Bonifacio was from the ranks of the working class. If the cleanup of his shrine could be maintained, he would be immensely pleased.



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THE residents of Navotas start clean up in barangays.

ROMAN PROSPERO

P1

## Will we ever have clean air?

CLEAN air has huge significance for each of us; so much so that it would be difficult to put a price on it. With clean air, we would live longer. We would spend more time outdoors. We would have more active lifestyles. We would be healthier and happier. We would be more productive. And so on.

Clean air is so valuable, yet achieving better air quality sometimes seems so unattainable. Over decades, we have become resigned to breathing polluted air day in and day out, and allowing our loved ones to share in our unhealthy environment.

Though the Clean Air Act of 1999 (Republic Act 8749) sets standards for emissions from both fixed and mobile sources, we don't have to look far to know



MOBILITY  
MATTERS

**ROBERT SIY**

that compliance is lacking and that the law has had little impact. Twenty years after the Clean Air Act was passed, we don't have much to show for it. This has to change.

Filipinos are dying earlier because of worsening air pollution, and the numbers are staggering. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that close to 50,000 Filipinos die prematurely every year because of ambient air pollution (43 deaths per 100,000 population). In addition, pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases

► **Mobility B3**

*Will we ever have clean air?*

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## MOBILITY FROM B1

# Will we

and lung cancer are on the rise.

The dominant source of outdoor air pollution are motor vehicles. In Metro Manila, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) calculated that motor vehicles account for about 88 percent of harmful emissions. Not surprising, given that the population of motor vehicles has grown at a rapid pace, congestion has worsened, and there are more vehicles stuck in traffic every day, burning fuel.

What is worrisome is that many more commuters are spending prolonged periods of time on highly polluted transport corridors (e.g., EDSA, Taft Avenue, Shaw Boulevard), waiting in queues or trying to catch rides at overcrowded bus or jeepney stops. Because smoke-belching buses and jeepneys are major sources of pollutants, the passengers who step in and out of these vehicles are also the most exposed.

Unhealthy air all around us provides additional motivation for people to prefer a private motor vehicle. There is the mistaken assumption that one can escape pollution by being inside an air-conditioned car. Partly for this reason, many commuters would like to buy a car as soon as they can afford to. The sad consequence is more traffic congestion and heavier air pollution for all.

How do we win the battle for clean air? First, we should invest aggressively in low-emission mobility options. This means creating the conditions so that people prefer to travel by walking, cycling or public transport, instead of in a private car.

The more walking or cycling we do for our daily travel, the better for our environment and for our health. In the end, we are all pedestrians. Investments in proper sidewalks, street lighting, and networks of protected bi-

cycle lanes are relatively low-cost, quick to implement, pro-poor and highly-visible. If newly-elected mayors are looking for projects that can be delivered within their three-year terms, these are examples of inclusive infrastructure with high impact.

At the same time, more and better public transport is needed in all urban areas. To raise the quality of public transport, services should allow easy transfers to different modes, and capacity should exceed travel demand. Mass transit (trains, bus rapid transit, etc.) should be available on high-volume corridors. The supply of public transport should be "abundant" so that commuters do not have to compete to get on a bus or train. The challenge is to raise the adequacy, convenience and reliability of public transport so that it becomes the preferred option, even for those who own private motor vehicles.

We need to review and revise the composition of our national and local government budgets so that we move away from spending that promotes motor vehicle use while increasing the allocations that support public transport, walking and cycling.

Second, we need to have a motor vehicle inspection system with high integrity. Our emissions standards make no sense unless the motor vehicle inspection system keeps unsafe and polluting vehicles off our roads. The recommendation of many experts is to have an automated inspection and emissions-testing system so that nothing is left to human discretion. Governance arrangements should ensure that such systems operate in a rigorous and fully transparent manner, with measures that prevent tampering of results. Establishing such a system on a nationwide basis should be one of the top priorities for the second half of the Duterte administration.

The current emissions standard

for new public utility vehicles (PUVs) is EURO IV or better. We should consider raising this minimum standard in the coming years to EURO VI, in line with global best practices. Some countries have set a goal of having a fully-electric zero-emission public transport fleet within the next decade; the Philippines should declare a similar goal in its long-term vision.

Third, we need to accelerate the modernization of buses and jeepneys to replace old, highly polluting vehicles. The PUV Modernization Program or PUVMP was launched over two years ago, but now needs to make much faster progress. To reduce the number of polluting PUVs, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) needs more budget, more program staff, more technical assistance and more implementation support. To address DOTr's capacity and financing gaps, external funding and technical assistance should be considered.

We need to see DOTr push the PUVMP with the same intensity that it has applied to the rail and aviation sectors. With some 200,000 old jeepneys (plus over 10,000 old buses) to replace, DOTr should aim for at least 50 percent accomplishment before the end of the Duterte administration. On high-volume corridors, where jeepneys are to be replaced by buses, jeepney operators should consolidate to become bus operators.

Today, the subsidy offered by DOTr for replacing an old jeepney unit stands at P80,000, which is small compared to the cost of a new vehicle. This low subsidy is one of the factors why some in the industry remain lukewarm or skeptical about the program. If the subsidy for surrendering old, polluting jeepneys is increased, much of the opposition to the program will dissolve; the additional financial inducement will facilitate consolidation of the many small operators and enable transformation to a new industry business model. PUVs on every

route operating as one team, free of on-street competition, drivers on fixed salary and benefits, and vehicles operating in a coordinated manner to respond to changes in demand. The benefits for the commuting public, including for workers in the transport industry, will far outweigh the budgetary cost for the subsidy.

For the sake of argument, raising the subsidy to P500,000 per jeepney will require a budget of P100 billion to cover the subsidy for 200,000 jeepneys, benefiting tens of millions of Filipinos nationwide with cleaner air and higher quality public transport. If the government is willing to spend P360 billion for the urgently-needed Metro Manila Subway (capacity 400,000 passengers daily), there should be no issue with spending P100 billion to benefit over 40 million jeepney passengers daily.

Will Filipinos ever enjoy clean air? Because motor vehicles are the major source of air pollution in Philippine cities, our quest for clean air needs to focus on the transport sector. The key player here is DOTr, rather than the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). What provides optimism is the fact that the strongest advocate for clean air in DOTr is Secretary Arthur P. Tugade.

Secretary Tugade often tells the story of losing his son, Perry, only 12 years old at the time, to asthma, because the air quality was so bad. Secretary Tugade is keenly aware of the link between air pollution and premature death. His strongest motivation for being in the public service is to make sure that Filipinos will not have to suffer the same loss that he did. This tells me that we can count on Secretary Tugade to find the best way forward.

*Robert Y. Siy is a development economist, city and regional planner, and public transport advocate. He can be reached at [mobilitymatters.ph@yahoo.com](mailto:mobilitymatters.ph@yahoo.com) or followed on Twitter @RobertRsiy*





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NEUTRAL STATUS

# RESPITE FROM WATER SHORTAGE, DRYSPELL SEEN AS END OF EL NIÑO NEARS

**By Ronnel W. Domingo**INQ  
@RonW DomingoINQ

The occurrence of El Niño, which brings dry conditions to the Philippines, is expected to end within the next two months, promising relief to affected farmers and water consumers especially in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

In their latest monthly advisory on the phenomenon, the United States' Climate Prediction Center (CPC) and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society said that while the El Niño continued to prevail last month, indicators of abnormal climate lessened.

"During June, El Niño was

reflected in the continued presence of above average sea surface temperatures (SST) across the central equatorial Pacific Ocean," the CPC said. "However, SST anomalies across most of the eastern Pacific decreased during the month."

The American agency said the latest array of forecasts showed a "rapid transition" to a neutral status, referring to the absence of El Niño as well as the La Niña, which in the Philippines brings abnormally wet conditions.

"A transition from El Niño to [neutral] is expected in the next month or two, with [neutral] most likely to continue through Northern Hemisphere

fall and winter," the CPC said.

Last week, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) warned that while inflation has eased in June to its slowest pace in 22 months, there were still risks of rising prices of basic goods from weather-related shocks along with uncertainties in the global oil market.

"We should prepare for the possible onslaught of nine to 13 typhoons in the coming months, as well as the above-normal amount of rainfall brought by the southwest monsoon or *habagat*," Neda said in a statement.

"On the other hand, the weak El Niño phenomenon has

been forecast to persist until August 2019, with a chance to continue until the first quarter of 2020," it added.

The agency reiterated its call to beef up production support and farm recovery programs in areas affected by El Niño.

In Metro Manila and nearby provinces, receding stock at the Angat Dam and La Mesa Dam has disrupted water services since March.

Daily water service interruptions are expected to continue until Angat Dam is replenished. Angat's normal operating level is at least 180 meters above sea level (masl), but the level was pegged at 159.69 masl as of Friday morning. INQ



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# Weekend low-pressure area may replenish Angat

A low-pressure area over the Pacific Ocean is expected to enter the Philippine area of responsibility tomorrow that could dump rains over Angat dam, which has fallen below critical level for the second time this rainy season.

As of yesterday noon, the weather system was spotted at 1,930 kilometers east of Mindanao, the Philippine Atmo-

spheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) reported.

The trough or extension of the low-pressure area will continue to bring cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms over Mindanao and Eastern and Central Visayas today and over the entire Visayas tomorrow.

This weekend, Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rains and thunderstorms.

By Monday, the weather system will start enhancing the southwest monsoon as it moves north-northwest toward Taiwan, bringing rains over southern Luzon and the Visayas. Cloudy skies with

scattered rains and thunderstorms will prevail over Calabarzon, Mimaropa, the Bicol region and the Visayas.

By Tuesday and Wednesday, it is likely to develop into a tropical cyclone but it is not expected to make landfall in any part of the country. The weather disturbance was forecast to maintain

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## Weekend From Page 1

its track toward Taiwan, the weather bureau said.

Rains will persist over Central Luzon, Metro Manila, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol and the Visayas from Tuesday to Wednesday. Northern Luzon

will be cloudy with scattered rains and thunderstorms.

Mindanao, meanwhile, will have generally fair weather apart from isolated rains and thunderstorms.

By Thursday and Friday,

the low-pressure area is projected to be over northern Taiwan but it will continue to strengthen the southwest monsoon. Monsoon rains will prevail over the Ilocos region, Mindoro provinces, Metro Manila, Calabarzon, Central Luzon and Bicol. Western Visayas and the rest of Luzon

will be cloudy with scattered rains and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rains and thunderstorms.

As of 6 a.m. yesterday, the water level at Angat dam – which is located in Norzagaray, Bulacan – was 159.69 meters,

still below its critical level of 160 meters.

Angat supplies about 97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs.

PAGASA hydrologist Richard Orendain earlier said Angat normally "recovers" in mid-July, citing the agency's 10-year data.

The National Water Re-

sources Board has reduced water allocation in Metro Manila and nearby areas to 36 cubic meters per second, from 46 CMS, as the dam reached critical level.

The dam's normal operating level is 180 meters, while its normal high water level is 210 meters. – **Helen Flore**



# 'Angat may hit lowest

BY DIVINA NOVA JOY DELA CRU

## level in July'

**T**HE water level at Angat Dam may hit an all time low if there will be no significant rainfall in the next two weeks, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Pagasa said the water level at Angat had further declined on Friday to 159.69 meters, a 0.24-meter drop from the previous day due to the "monsoon break."

"Starting ng July 6, *hindi na tayo nagkaroon ng pag-ulan doon sa area kaya po yung dam natin ay bumababa siya* (Starting July 6, we didn't have [significant] rains

over the area that's why it has been dropping)," Pagasa hydrologist Adelaida Duran said.

"*Ngayon, yung forecast statement po for the next few weeks ay hindi masyadong maulan kaya 'yung trend niya talaga ay pababa* (Not much rain is expected in the forecast statement for the next few weeks so that trend is declining)," Duran added.

She further said that if the trend continues, Angat could still hit its lowest level ever.

"*Kung wala po talaga tayong mararanasan na pag-ulan* by the

end of the month so *'yung baba po niya na 0.30 [meters], 10 days lang po siya, ilan na yung pagbaba niya, so maaari po siyang abutin* (It could hit the record-low level in 10 days if there will be no rains by the end of the month as the average daily drop is at 0.30 meters)," Duran said.

She said the climatological rainfall forecast for July is below normal, while near normal to normal rainfall is still expected in August and October.

Pagasa is currently monitoring a low pressure area outside the

Philippine area of responsibility (PAR), which could possibly develop into a tropical depression and will be named "Falcon." It was last spotted at 2,025 east of Davao City as of 8 a.m. on Friday and is expected to enter the PAR on Sunday or Monday but is unlikely to make landfall.

Duran, however, said that even if it might develop into a tropical depression, there was no guarantee it would raise Angat's water level.

"*Ang expectation natin, 'pag may bagyo, tataas na yung level*

*ng ating mga dam, so hindi po ganon. Kung dumaan po 'yung bagyo o 'yung rainbands niya doon sa area at naka-receive ng rainfall 'yung watershed na 'yun, meron pong posibilidad na tumaas yung level.* (Our expectation is that the water level would increase if there is a tropical cyclone, but it is not always the case. If the tropical cyclone or its rainbands pass by the area and the watershed receives rainfall, there is a possibility that it would increase)," Duran explained.



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## 96-97% of Manila Water customers enjoy 16 hours of water supply daily - Dela Cruz

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**  
and **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

About 99.9 percent of the seven million customers of Manila Water are getting at least eight hours of water every day, despite the limited water supply in Metro Manila and nearby areas, Manila Water president and CEO Ferdinand Dela Cruz revealed Friday.

About 96-97 percent of Manila Water customers enjoy 16 hours of water supply every day, while 93-94 percent receive 24 hours of water each day, he added.

"Our average water availability is about 23.4 hours," he added.

From 150 million liters per day (mld) of deficit last March, Manila Water has a deficit of almost 350 MLD since June 22 when the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) reduced its allocation for domestic use in Metro **►7**

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96-97% of Manila Water customers enjoy 16 hours of water supply - Dela Cruz

## 96-97% of Manila...

◀1

Manila from Angat Dam.

NWRB had earlier said it is maintaining the 36 cubic meters per second (cms) or around 3.1 billion liters per day allocation until end of July. This is for distribution by Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to its water concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad.

As of Friday, Angat Dam's water level remains below its 160-meter critical level. It further dipped to 159.69 meters from Thursday's 159.93 meters.

Despite the dwindling level at Angat Dam, Manila Water said it has narrowed the supply gap with the increase in production in its Cardona Water Treatment Plant in Rizal, rehabilitation of existing deep wells and construction of new wells across the east zone concession, and efficient reduction of its systems loss or non-revenue water.

Dela Cruz said Manila Water started to accept new water service connection applications this week, after it was suspended last March due to water supply shortage.

There are roughly 2,000 pending applications, which are mostly for domestic use.

"This week, we started entertaining applications. Also, we are now in the process of clearing that backlog," he said.

However, the new applications, Dela Cruz pointed out are "subject to evaluation of the supply situation in the area."

"We ask our customers to sign a waiver because everyone is aware of the current water situation.

### Three strong typhoons

Speaking to Manila Bulletin, Dela Cruz said as long as there are no new water sources and there's not enough rains filling the major dams, Metro Manila - home to more than 12 million people - will continue to suffer from

rotational and even longer water interruption.

"We need three strong typhoons to fill Angat," Dela Cruz said. That, or an Ondoy-like typhoon, which was one of the worst natural disasters to hit the Philippines in history.

To appeal to the heavens for rain, Dela Cruz said they have been reciting the "Oratio Imperata" (obligatory prayer for a grave need) daily at 8 a.m. at the Manila Water offices since March when water supply started to dwindle.

Metro Manila gets its water supply from the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system. Angat Dam currently supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs, releasing about 4 million liters of water per day.

Of this, Manila Water gets an allocation of 1,600 mld, while West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. is allowed to get the rest or about 2,400 mld.

Dela Cruz said that even if the situation in Angat Dam stabilizes in September as forecasted by government, the fact remains that that the metropolis is now at the mercy of how much rains will hit the areas where the aging dams are situated.

He blamed this to growing population, climate change, and the lack of new water sources.

Right now, the MWSS is fast-tracking the development of new water sources including the 188 mld Sumag; 50 mld Rizal Wellfield; 80 mld Calawis Wawa; 100 mld Putatan 3; 250 mld Lower Ipo; 420 mld Wawa Dam; 250 mld East Bay; 350 mld Bayabas Dam; 550 mld Angat Norzagaray Phase 2; 250 mld East Bay; 750 mld Sierra Madre; and 1,800 mld Kanan River Phase 1.

### Volatile situation

But, all of these projects wouldn't come on-line until the latter part of 2020 until 2027.

There is also 600 mld Kaliwa Dam project, whose implementation began in 2017 but is still pending due to environment-related issues. This is expected to be completed in 2023.

As for Manila Water, which is currently having its "worst year so far," the company said it has nearly completed its recovery efforts from the supply deficit it experienced beginning in March 2019.

As of last week, the Cardona WTP was already producing up to 63 mld and the total yield from all operational deep wells has reached 58 mld.

Starting from a 150 mld of deficit last March to almost 350 mld in late June - when the NWRB reduced its allocation for domestic use in Metro Manila from Angat Dam - the company said it has successfully narrowed the supply gap with increased production in its Cardona Water Treatment (WTP) Plant in Rizal.

Then the company also rehabilitated existing deep wells and construction of new wells across the East Zone, while reducing its systems loss or Non-Revenue Water (NRW).

Moreover, from an average of 12 percent NRW from late last year to early this year, it has been reduced to 7.5 percent in June 2019.

"With an average production of 1,500 mld, the 4.5 percent improvement in NRW translated to almost 70 mld volume of water which we can use to help to bridge the deficit," said Manila Water Chief Operating Officer Abelardo P. Basilio.

"While we have increased our efficiencies and the technical solutions we have put in place are ensuring we are able to distribute the still-limited supply as equitably as we can, we cannot rest and let our guard down. The water supply situation remains volatile and continue to change day to day as Angat, Ipo and La Mesa Dams remain in sub-ideal levels," he added.



**EXCLUSIVE**

# Water firms cheat public

## Plunder urged on Manila Water, Maynilad

Actually when Singapore was rehabilitating its water ways, it took them about 10 years

**By Chito Lozada**

Water concessionaires Manila Water and Maynilad have been

“duping” consumers for a long time since both do not have water treatment facilities but collect fees for these through the monthly bills.

In an exclusive pre-State of the Nation Address interview with the *Daily Tribune*, President Rodrigo Duterte said that the public can even sue both private firms for “plunder” since

they have been collecting fees for services that they do not provide.

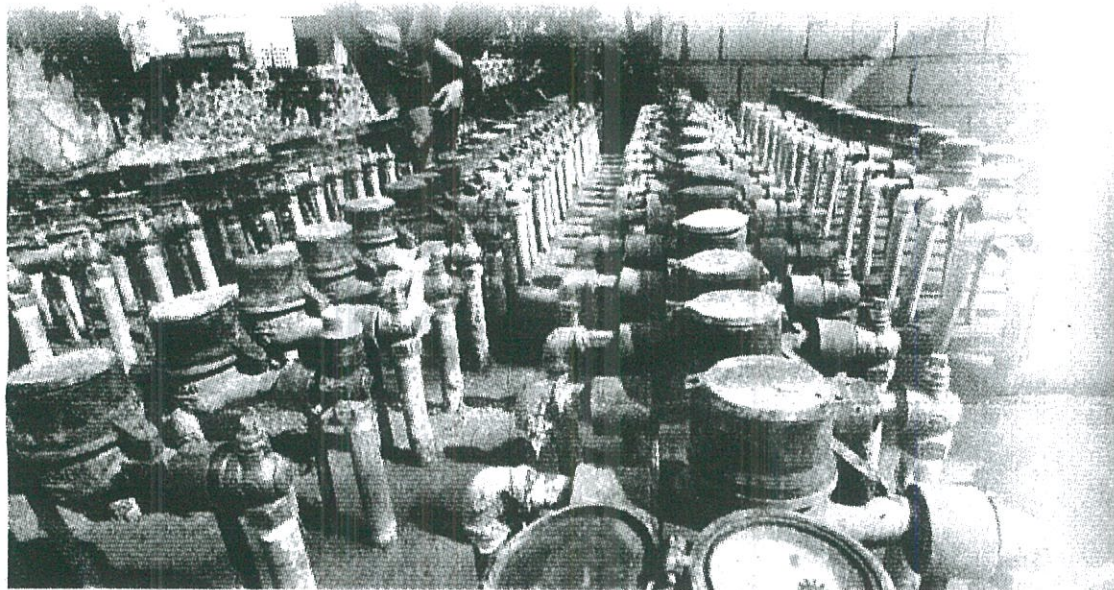
“There are several buildings along Pasig River, fronting it and back, we have to ask everybody to provide a new system of sewerage so that they can collect the water and go to big pipes that would run to the water treatment facilities,” Mr. Duterte said.

He noted that this is a critical

need since even water from the canals will go there.

The President, however, conceded it may take time for the country to have an

**Turn to page A2**



**Fools' row** Water services in Metro Manila do not impress the President who said the private concessionaires have been hoodwinking consumers.

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# Water firms cheat public

They have started to require buildings and restaurants to connect to a pipe that will go to a water treatment system

**From page A1**

efficient system to clean and recycle water which, in turn, is crucial in the rehabilitation of waterways.

"Actually when Singapore was rehabilitating its water ways, it took them about 10 years..." he said.

"We may have to turn Greater Manila upside down," he added.

"The end game there is that they (water) would go... the lower level of the topography and join marine life there... so I would say that, I'm not the one... you have to give a President something like 10 years to do this. All the improvements that can (be done),... Mr. Duterte added.

The President said that Congress and local governments have started to provide help in cleaning up the water system.

"They have started to require buildings and restaurants to connect to a pipe there that will go to a water treatment system," he said.

Mr. Duterte cited as example, the water treatment scheme in advanced countries like Canada where toilet water are recycled to something which can be safe to drink.

"I went there and they asked me to drink but I refused. All of these water that we collect from the bathrooms and everything goes to one big lake and you can just scoop water there and drink," the President said.

## Damocles sword hangs

The President earlier threatened to fire officials of state regulator Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and terminate the contracts of the two water concessionaires due to the poor water service mainly in Metro Manila.

Mr. Duterte met with officials of the state regulator and the water firms where presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said the Chief Executive was "obviously outraged."

"In a stern message delivered without even once looking at the officials, the obviously outraged President threatened to fire the MWSS officials and terminate the concessionaires' contracts," Panelo said.

"The meeting which was more of a presidential monologue lasting for about 40 minutes, was abruptly ended by the President by ordering the officials to submit a report on the water shortage after which he will decide whether heads will roll or whether the contracts of the concessionaires will be terminated," he added.

## Only excuses

The livid President refused to listen to their explanations tagging them as "just plain excuses" for neglecting their jobs to provide water services in Metro Manila.

The Chief Executive told them he was not going to listen to their explanation as to why there was a water shortage as such would be just plain excuses. They simply did not do their job.

Moreover, Panelo said the officials knew of the problem leading to the disruption of water flow but "they did not resolve to prevent it from happening."



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## Baguio gets green project proposals

**BAGUIO CITY:** Mayor Benjamin Magalong welcomed offers to conduct feasibility studies on new technologies managing solid and liquid wastes, two of the Summer Capital's pressing concerns.

Magalong last week gave the go signal for studies to determine the viability of two proposed technologies: the first from Japanese company Toyo Energy Solution Co. Ltd. for a waste-to-energy system of disposing the city's daily garbage output of 400 metric tons; and the second from Cebu-based Mactan Rock Industries for the processing of the city's wastewater into potable produce.

In a July 5 meeting, Toyo executives Koichi Ishizaka, Takashi Kanazawa and Yoshimitsu Okada offered to put up a plant that would convert the city's refuse into electricity, methane gas and solid fuel without the need for segregation (except for toxic or hospital wastes) and incineration.

There would also be no gas emission or thermal combustion in the system and 20 percent of the fuel produced would be used to power the plant and the rest could be sold.

The plant would require a 4-hectare lot to process the city's wastes, 40 percent of which is biodegradable.

Toyo representatives assured that they would go through the required processes like the conduct of a feasibility study and the securing of the Environmental Impact Assessment before the project will be implemented.

The mayor allowed members of the Zero Waste Coalition in the city to witness the presentation and scrutinize the proposed project.

Meanwhile, Mactan Rock Chief Executive Officer Antonio Tompar on July 8 pitched his technology that will treat the city's liquid wastes and convert it to drinking water at no cost to the city.

He said the produce would be sold at a lower cost or at the level of non-potable water for household use.

Mactan Rock has put up more than 30 wastewater treatment plants all over the country that are now producing clear water with the use of their high performance water clarifiers and other equipment.

Tompar agreed to the mayor's suggestion to conduct a feasibility study on the expansion of the existing sewerage treatment plant at South Sanitary Camp and on the proposed construction of two new plants, one to be put up at Rock Quarry *barangay* (village) and the other at the Slaughterhouse Compound Magsaysay Avenue.

Based on the study that will be done at no cost to the city, Tompar would submit an unsolicited proposal for the city's consideration.

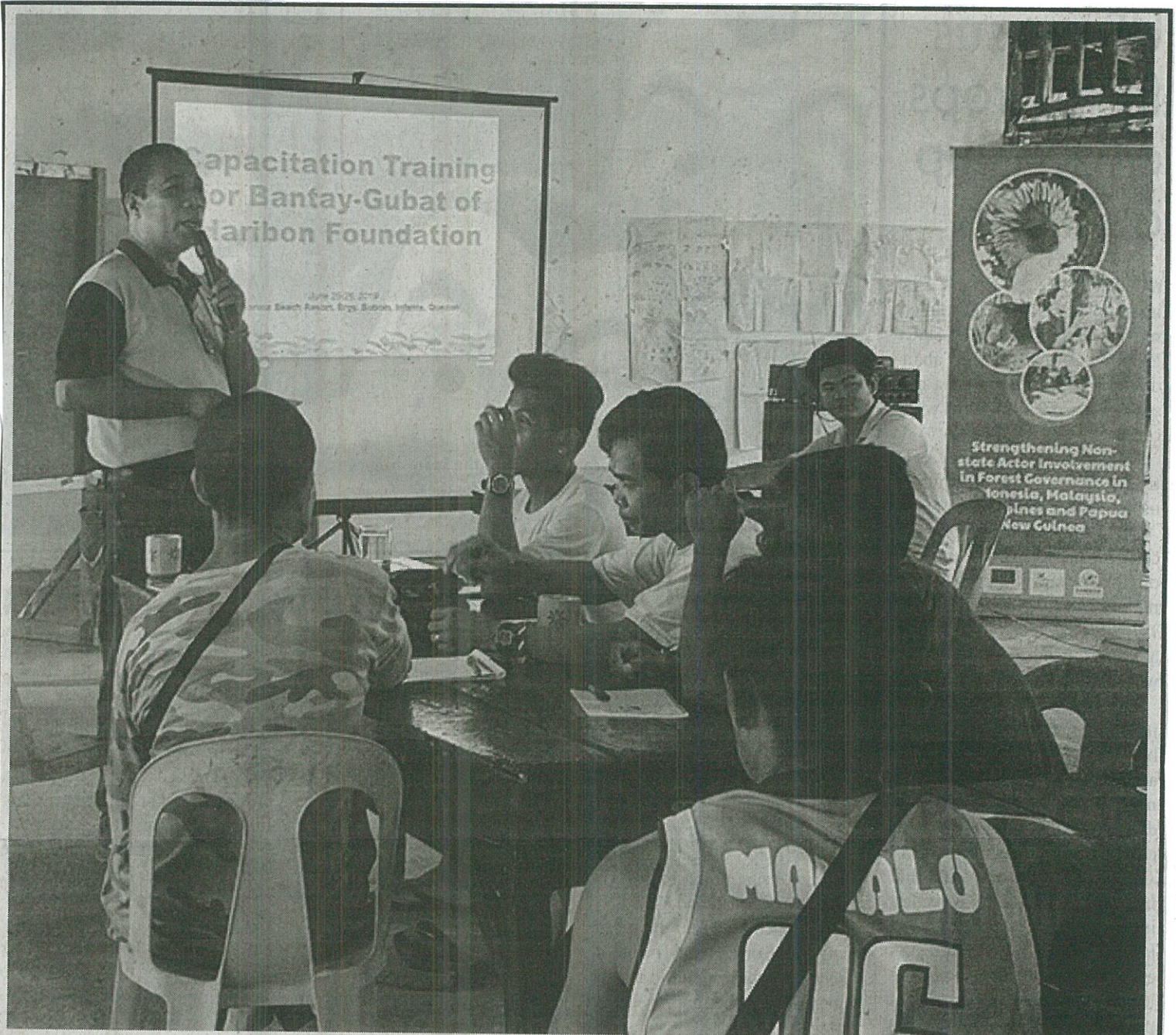
He noted that the city's plan for its sewage management as presented by City Environment and Parks Management Officer Ruben Cervantes and CEPMO Water, Wastewater Ambient Air Management Division head engineer Moises Lozano is on the right direction as it complements Mountain Rock's scheme.

The water treatment projects are being pursued to address the increasing volume of sewage that flows into the city's waterways and drains into the river tributaries thereby contributing to their pollution levels.

**GABY B. KEITH**



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**GUARDING THE FORESTS** The Bantay Gubat (forest wardens) of the Agta-Dumagat-Remontado tribe in General Nakar, Quezon join a training on environmental laws and community livelihood assets, which helps identify livelihood opportunities based on available community resource. This effort is part of a bigger campaign to strengthen community voice and action in forest management by the Haribon Foundation and funded by the European Union, in partnership with BirdLife International. Visit [haribon.org.ph](http://haribon.org.ph) to learn more. PHOTO BY SHALIMAR ILEJAY, HARIBON FOUNDATION



# Searca bats for climate-smart villages

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

**L**OS BAÑOS, Laguna: The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) see the potential of establishing climate-smart villages (CSVs) for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Climate Resilience Network.

Glenn Gregorio, Searca director, said the program was grounded on Searca and IIRR's proven experience in conducting innovative

regional learning activities and working with communities on climate-resilient agriculture.

Searca, according to Gregorio,

will host the workshop on establishing CSVs in the Asean to improve food security and resiliency in local communities. The workshop would be hosted at the Searca headquarters here on July 8 to 14.

The CSV approach was developed by the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

"The CSV approach is to help address climatic risks to agriculture-based livelihood. Specifically, it aims to enable farmers to learn

from evidence generated at the local level and build their own CSVs," Gregorio explained.

He said the workshop, which was designed for Asean member-states, would provide participants with experiential knowledge on the principles and practice of CCAFS' CSV approach to promote climate-smart agriculture and its potential in enhancing food security in local communities.

The workshop will highlight the experiences in establishing CSVs in Southeast Asia, particularly the CSV in Guinayangan, Quezon initiated by IIRR, Gregorio added.

Since 2014, the Guinayangan climate-smart agriculture interventions have reached 1,500 farmers through farmer-to-farmer scaling. The Guinayangan CSV has also been a "go-to site" for agricultural development workers learning the participatory approaches, technologies and social learning methodologies to promote climate-smart agriculture and villages.

The Department of Agriculture also used it as a learning site for capacitating 17 of its regional field offices and their respective local government units in developing Adaptation and Mitigating

Initiatives in Agriculture or AMIA villages — the Philippine adaptation of CSV — in all 17 regions in the country.

"Often in partnership with like-minded institutions, Searca regularly organizes high-level discussions that may support policy advocacy and encourage organizations to learn from best practices of their counterparts from the Asean region," Gregorio said.

Co-organizing the workshop is an initiative under Searca's Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Southeast Asia.



## 'Art in Defense of Mother Nature'

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ONE fine morning, I was invited by a good friend, environmentalist and activist (artist-activist) AG Saño, whom I met when I was still working with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF Philippines), for the formal unveiling of his latest public art or mural titled "Art in Defense of Mother Nature." I borrowed the title of the mural as the title of my column today.

Have you seen the public art or mural?

Few days before the formal unveiling of the mural, I and my intern, Adrian Camposagrado, volunteered our time to do simple painting works in the Paseo de Roxas underpass. Literally, you would find the entire underpass with a new art canopy. The area that was once a space-themed mural to inspire the younger generation to reach for their dreams was transformed to a sanctuary of Philippine terrestrial and marine creatures, hoping to convey the same message of hope for a brighter future for Filipinos, this time through conserving Mother Nature.

With humans as the main culprits of biodiversity damage, altering 75 percent of Earth's land and 66 percent of marine environments since pre-industrial times, according to the latest Global Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released last May 2019, "the natural defense mechanisms of species are not



### ALL ABOUT CHOICES

LUDWIG O. FEDERIGAN

enough anymore to cope with what humans have been doing to their habitats," Saño exclaimed. He thought of equipping them with metal armors to signify the need to go beyond the status quo and exert more effort in helping the ecosystem thrive and the species survive.

AG Saño redesigned the entire

Paseo De Roxas underpass mural upon the invitation of Security Bank Corp. Saño has been traveling the world to work on murals, clad with designs that show his advocacy to protect Mother Nature. "I said yes to the collaboration with Security Bank because of our shared values and mission. I learned about their deep engagement with communities through their education and livelihood programs because they are committed to making lives better. I found a partner who will help me get my message across. I don't think it's a coincidence that when I began the mural I found out that

my mother has been a Security Bank client for over three decades. This partnership was meant to be," said Saño, now a Security Bank client himself.

"The theme for the Makati underpasses was Philippine nature and since education is our corporate advocacy, we decided to take this opportunity educate the public about issues that are affecting nature, specifically Philippine biodiversity through art," Alfonso Salcedo Jr., Security Bank Corp. president and chief executive officer, said during the formal launch at the Discovery Hub.

With a large network all over



■ (From left) Adrian Camposagrado, activist (artist-activist) AG Saño and the author at the Paseo de Roxas underpass in Makati City. LUDGWIG FEDERIGAN PHOTO



## Art in defense of mother nature

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the country, Security Bank is in a position to inspire change and rally support for various causes affecting local communities. "We develop and support social responsibility initiatives all over the Philippines. This mural is one of the ways we hope to educate and inspire the Makati community," Salcedo added.

Saño has painted more than 700 murals in 16 countries depicting peace and environment. A conservationist who has been involved in marine research since 2000 and a founding member of Balyena.org, a nonprofit group focused on marine mammal research and conservation in the Philippines, he has also done projects with reputable nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and institutions such as the World Wide Fund for Nature, Greenpeace, Oxfam International, RARE, Conservation International, Siliman University, Large Marine Vertebrates, Philippine Federation for Environmental Concerns, among others.

The AFP Headquarters (Camp Aguinaldo) Peace Wall along EDSA-White Plains-Bonny Serrano Avenue, now considered as the longest peace mural in the world, was also his creation together with more than 4,000 volunteers.

"I dedicate my art to educate and spread awareness about nature and peace to the masses especially in areas where access to art is almost non-existent," Saño said.

We may not know it but public art or mural could boost pride and resilience of our community. There are several stories of com-

munities who have embraced the relationship of public art and resilience — communities that have used public art to prevent crime in a troubled neighborhood and boost community engagement. Public art genuinely reflects our own vision and values.

### About AG Saño

Saño is a renowned and multi-awarded Filipino artist who finished his Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree in the University of the Philippines Diliman and passed the specialty board exam the following year. He was accepted as a member of the International Federation of Landscape Architects and Philippine Association of Landscape Architects.

His advocacy extends to peace efforts in Mindanao as a founding member of the Board of Trustees of Teach Peace Build Peace Movement, an NGO focused on peace through education and arts. CLP School, known for its peace advocacy, gave him the second Gawad Kalinaw Award for Peace.

*The author is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (United States). He may be emailed at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.*



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### LEASE OF PUBLIC LANDS

Notice is hereby given that the DENR-CENRO Lianga, Surigao del Sur will auction through oral bidding at ten o'clock (10:00) A.M. on July 2, 2019 the right to lease for **commercial** purposes the tract of land herein described below. Written bids in the prescribed form must be submitted not later than 10:00 A.M. on the said date.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Location   | : | Cagbaoto, Bayabas, Surigao del Sur   |
| Description  | : | Foreshore area bounded on<br>SW., by lot 145, PLS-872<br>NW., by foreshore<br>NE., by Pacific Ocean<br>SE., by foreshore |
| Area   | : | 19,651 square meters   |
| Appraised value of land                                | : | Php3,930,200.00  |
| Appraised value of Improvements<br>(Existing/Proposed) | : | Php2,766,000.00  |
| Applied by   | : | Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corporation<br>MLA-166802-01  |

The right to lease the land will be awarded to the person offering the highest annual rental, which shall not be less than three (3%) per centum of the value of the land plus one (1%) per centum of the value of proposed and/or existing improvements. In order that a person may be entitled to participate in the bidding, he must be a qualified lease applicant, and must, before the commencement of the same, make a deposit equivalent to at least three (3) months rental. Only deposits in cash, money order, treasury warrant, certified check, cashier's or manager's check shall be accepted. A person bidding in representation of another may do so under a duly executed power of attorney. During the bidding, the bidder has to make an additional deposit every time his bid is raised, to complete the three (3) months rental; otherwise such bid as raised shall not be accepted. The right is reserved by this office to reject, any or all bids.

The successful bidder if other the applicant must reimburse the latter of the value of the improvements and the expenses for the publication of the notice of auction.

(SGD.) CLIFF C. ABRAHAN  
CENR Officer