

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

DENR AND DUTERTE

IN HIS latest press conference, incoming President Rodrigo Duterte clarified that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is a concession to the Left despite previously stating that he wanted the military to be deployed against those that destroyed the environment.

Duterte said that the two foremost criteria for the Cabinet are integrity and competence.

In the current bench of the Left with national prominence, integrity and competence on environment policy, there are two that come to mind.

First is Akbayan Rep. Walden Bello. He had clear positions on the need to address destructive mining and other activities hazardous to the environment.

During his senatorial campaign, Bello campaigned for a moratorium on mining in the country.

He is also a known expert on climate change advocacy.

He has sponsored in Congress the Alternative Mining Bill, which seeks to replace the Mining Act of 1995.

He is also an expert on international political economy, which is very relevant in the issue on who benefits the most in our mining activities.

Rep. Bello also lectures in different conferences around the world as part of the Focus on the Global South, an international policy group for the developing world.

Second is Kabataan Rep. Terry Ridon. As member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, he initiated congressional inquiries on destructive mining activities in different parts of the country.

He was also prominent in the fight against legalizing incinerators for solid waste management.

As an environmental lawyer from UP Law, he lawyered in the Supreme Court for the three-year suspension of construction of a 600-MW coal-fired power plant in Subic.

He also represented environmental groups in defending the critically endangered Philippine Cockatoo from coal-fired power plants in Palawan.

Ridon also defended fishermen against the still suspended reclamation of Manila Bay.

He had also served as panelist on environmental law before different judges and justices from Asian countries through the Asian Judges Network on the Environment.

Bello or Ridon will surely be assets of the Duterte administration in the defense of the environment.

Both are known for their expertise and integrity in environment protection. Bello has in his favor the wisdom brought by years of advocacy and activism, while Ridon has with him the fire of youth with the burden of inter-generational responsibility.

We wish them well.

KABATAAN PARTY LIST

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Bleaching hits corals in Snake Island reefs

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

A TEAM of experts conducting orientation and photo documentation in Kalumpang or Snake Island in Honda Bay, Palawan, has expressed alarm over the massive coral bleaching occurring in the area.

Theresa Mundita S. Lim, director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), said initial report revealed that as much as 90 percent of the corals in three different sites around Snake Island were already affected.

Ironically, the discovery of the dying corals came after the operationalization of Snake Island as the national marine research station of the DENR.

Specifically, the activity conducted from May 10 to 13, aims to showcase the three major coastal ecosystems in the area, including coral reef, sea grass beds and mangroves.

"On a rough estimate, the coral bleaching observed on the said three areas has an average of about 75-percent to 90-percent coverage," according to the report, a copy of which was obtained by the BUSINESSMIRROR.

The team—composed of representatives from the DENR-BMB through the Coastal and Marine Division, DENR-Palawan Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO), Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, Studio H2O and the UP Marine Science Institute—dived in the three sites around Snake Islands to take photos, but was surprised

P500M

The allocation received by the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau to rehabilitate damaged corals this year

to see the condition of the corals.

The coral bleaching, according to the report, could be an effect of El Niño.

The same sites were earlier assessed by another team from the DENR's Ecosystem Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) just two weeks ago and found the corals to be still in good condition.

Lim, the country's top biodiversity expert, said there is a need to identify remaining coral-reef areas that are still healthy.

"We need to put in place appropriate management regime in the area. We need to protect remaining reef areas that are not yet affected to protect the source of our recruitment in the process of rehabilitating the corals," she said.

Lim said the discovery is "alarming" and needs immediate action by the DENR-BMB and various stakeholders.

"We need to look into it. This could also be happening in other areas," she added.

According to scientists, coral bleaching happens with the loss of intracellular endosymbionts through either expulsion or loss of algal pigmentation.

The corals that form the structure of the great reef ecosystems of tropical seas depend upon a symbiotic relationship with algae-like unicellular flagellate protozoa that are photosynthetic and live within their tissues.

Coral bleaching happens because of stress caused by a number of factors, including climate-change effects, such as increase in ocean temperature, sea-level rise or ocean acidification.

Corals are important habitat-forming marine species. They serve as breeding grounds of fish and serves as nursery for small fish. Corals can die if it fails to recover from extensive damage caused by bleaching.

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Lim said coral bleaching in Honda Bay could also be an effect of the disturbance in the marine ecosystem, such as significant loss of the all-important parrotfish in the area.

Parrotfish are voracious herbivores that eat the algae off of coral reefs with their beak-like teeth.

"This could be because of over-fishing or destructive fishing methods in the area. There are important fish species that help coral remain healthy," she said.

Lim said the corals may still recover, depending on the extent of the damage.

According to Lim, biodiversity is important in strengthening the resilience of an ecosystem to climate change.

"If there are illegal fishing activities, such as dynamite or cyanide fishing, we need to stop it. Rehabilitation will depend on the cooperation of the LGUs, private sector and community. If they will

not cooperate, the entire ecosystem in Honda Bay will be lost," she said.

According to Lim, there is a need to conduct a more thorough assessment in Honda Bay, as well as the diversity of fish and other marine life in the area.

She said the assessment should identify what are the factors that led to the bleaching of corals.

"If there are developments in Honda Bay that caused the bleaching, we must stop it. Rehabilitating corals will take time, but if all human-induced events are stopped, such as in Tubbataha, we can see signs of recovery in just a year," she said.

Snake Island is being developed by the DENR for several years now. As early as 1991, the DENR has introduced developments projects in the area.

It sits at the heart of Honda Bay, which means "deep bay" in Spanish. It is situated on the eastern shore of the island of Palawan near

Puerto Princesa City.

The bay is used for both subsistence and commercial fishing, as well as recreation, being a major tourist destination in Palawan.

In 2002 the DENR constructed an Offshore Monitoring Station and medium-sized structures in the area.

Environment Secretary Ramon JP Paje, signed DAO 2011-12 on November 3, 2011, which established Snake Island as the DENR's national coastal and marine center for research. Snake Island was converted from an ecotourism destination to research center.

An initial amount of P3 million was authorized for immediate release by the DENR chief for the renovation and enhancement of the facility in Snake Island.

The initial fund was augmented by another P5 million to cover the salaries and wages of six laborers specifically tasked to guard the island, maintain its cleanliness, and effectively

implement the closure order to any tourism activity in the island.

The Snake Island now has at least 17 hectares of mangrove area composed of nine species.

The center of the widest portion of the island is extensively planted with mangrove trees. The cross section of which measures approximately 700 meters from west to east and is submerged in water, forming a chest-deep lagoon during high tide.

Around the island, various species of caesionid (*dalagang bukid*) and jacks (*talakitok*), are very common near the surface and at middle of the water column, while different sizes of fish such as groupers (*lapu-lapu*), acanthurids (*labahita*), siganids (*danggit*) and damselfish (*palata*) are observed near the sea bottom.

The DENR-BMB was given a budget of P500 million this year to jumpstart a national program to rehabilitate damaged corals in various parts of the country.

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NDF: Left satisfied with two Cabinet posts

By Philip C. Tubeza

HONG KONG—Four would have been great but two is okay.

National Democratic Front (NDF) spokesperson Fidel Agcaoili yesterday hailed the appointment by President-elect Rodrigo Duterte of two progressives to his Cabinet.

Agcaoili said the Left “understood” as to why Duterte was not able to fulfill his promise to name four members of the Left to his official family, adding that this would boost efforts to revive the peace process with communist rebels.

On Tuesday, Duterte named former Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael

Mariano as his agrarian reform secretary and University of the Philippines professor Judy Taguiwalo as head of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

“Of course, that’s a welcome development. It means President-elect Digong is standing up to his commitment. We understand why he decided to (renege on the promise about) the Department of Environment and Natural Resources,” Agcaoili said.

“(Duterte) said there were many syndicates there and mining companies have paramilitaries so it’s better if he would take it on, clean up the syndicates and later turn it over,” he said.

“So, our nominee might be consid-

ered as undersecretary,” he added.

Agcaoili said the Left also did not mind that Duterte named former Justice Secretary Silvestre “Bebot” Bello III as labor chief even before they could submit their nominee for the Department of Labor and Employment.

“That’s his choice. It’s his prerogative to choose who should be in his Cabinet. And we have no objections to Bebot. He has proven himself to be a patriot and pro-labor,” Agcaoili said.

“We expect that Bebot will stand up and take up what President-elect Duterte said; that he is against contractualization,” he added.

Agcaoili said Duterte also wanted the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) cleaned up of scalawags.

“He is concerned with the NLRC because I think his experience, which is also the experience of unions, is that decisions by the local regional committees that are somewhat favorable to unions are reversed when they (are appealed) at the national (level),” Agcaoili said.

He said the appointments of Mariano and Taguiwalo would help in the “advancement” of the stalled peace process between Manila and the NDF.

“I think it would be contributory to the advancement of the peace negotiations because one of the demands of the revolutionary movement has always been the implementation of land reform,” Agcaoili said.

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4 Cabinet posts still waiting to be filled

By EDITH REGALADO and ALEXIS ROMERO

DAVAO CITY – Four Cabinet positions in the administration of president-elect Rodrigo Duterte remain vacant, his spokesman Salvador Panelo said yesterday.

With less than a month before his inauguration, Duterte has yet to appoint people to occupy the top posts in the departments of trade and industry, health, tourism, and environment and natural resources.

Duterte met with the members of his Cabinet for the first time last Tuesday at the so-called Malacañang of the South at the compound of the Department of Public Works and Highways here in Barangay Panacan.

He described the members of his Cabinet as persons with "integrity and honesty" and for whom he could vouch before the Commission on Appointments when the time for their confirmation comes.

He emphasized that all his officials were his personal choices and that no screening committee had recommended or picked them for him.

The president-elect said he is still in the process of talking with certain individuals who could be qualified to fill the vacant positions. He said he had considered a leftist personality to head the environment department but later changed his mind and decided a military man would be best for the job.

Duterte admitted he is having difficulty filling the vacancies in the Cabinet due to low pay.

"I am still reviewing (the records of candidates). There are so many recommendees," Duterte said in a press conference last Tuesday. "There will be equal (opportunities). It will really be an inclusive government."

The incoming Cabinet has at least two leftists – former Anakpawis representative Rafael Mariano as agrarian reform secretary and University of the Philippines professor Judy Taguiwalo as social welfare secretary. Mariano and Taguiwalo were nominated by the National Democratic Front (NDF).

Silvestre Bello III, who served as chief government negotiator with the NDF, will assume the position of labor secretary.

The president-elect also said he would accommodate Muslim appointees but did not specify what positions would be given to them.

With regard to the health department, Duterte said he is already talking to a prospective appointee but declined to provide details.

In a previous press briefing, Duterte said Tourism Secretary Ramon Jimenez Jr. was "doing good." It remains to be seen if the advertising and marketing guru would be retained.

For the chairmanship of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Duterte said the recommendation of incoming transportation secretary Arthur Tugade would be "vital."

Other unfilled top posts include those for the Commission on Higher Education, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Presidential Management Staff, National Anti-Poverty Commission, Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, Office of the Political Adviser, Presidential Legal Counsel, Climate Change Commission and the newly formed Department of Information and Communication Technology.

Duterte Cabinet

Outgoing Education Secretary Armin Luistro welcomed former national treasury chief Leonor Briones as his successor.

"Professor Briones will bring with her a wealth of experience in public finance and administration which would be beneficial to the Department of Education, the agency with the largest budget," Luistro said in a statement.

Briones was formally introduced as the next DepEd chief during Duterte's press conference.

Luistro said he would meet with his successor this week to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of reforms at the agency.

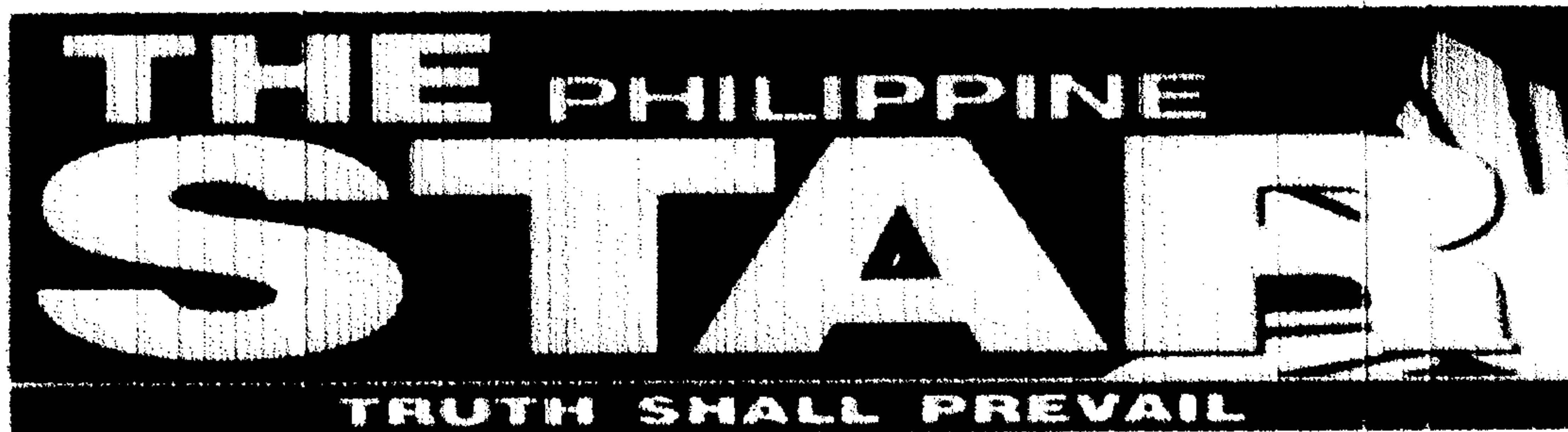
For his part, Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina is willing to cooperate with former Philippine Marine captain Nicanor Faeldon, who will succeed him at the bureau.

Lina said he would offer advice about the operations at the Bureau of Customs (BOC).

But before he leaves the BOC on June 30, Lina is hoping to finish the implementing rules and regulations of the recently approved Customs Modernization and Tariff Act so his successor can implement it.

Incoming science and technology secretary Fortunato dela Peña learned of his appointment when he was asked to attend the press conference on Tuesday.

"I knew (that I was appointed to the post) when they started calling the names of the appointees," Dela Peña, who retired as DOST undersecretary two years ago, told The STAR.



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He said he got a call last week from Duterte's executive assistant Bong Go, asking him to submit his curriculum vitae.

He got another call on Monday, telling him to go to Davao City immediately.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) hailed the appointments of Mariano and Taguiwalo.

Bayan said Mariano and Taguiwalo are excellent choices for the posts, noting their experience in serving the marginalized and oppressed sectors of society.

Incoming agriculture secretary Emmanuel Piñol vowed to resign if the farming industry sees no improvement after a year under his leadership.

"Time is precious. There's no point for me to stay if I don't improve the growth of the agriculture sector one year after I arrive," Piñol told **The STAR**. — **With Janvic Mateo, Rainier Allan Ronda, Evelyn Macairan, Rhodina Villanueva, Artemio Dumlao, Louise Maureen Simeon**



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DENR sets new rules on issuance of ECCs

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has imposed a new regulation on the processing and issuance of environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for new mining operations.

In the memorandum circular No.006, the DENR said only the ECC application of an entity or corporation whose name appear on the government-issued Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) or the Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) shall be processed by the agency.

"No new application for an ECC shall be processed and issued in the name of any applicant unless the same applicant shall be the entity or corporation as reflected in an MPSA and/or FTAA," the DENR added.

The new requirement "shall apply to all new applications for ECC for the opera-

tion of sand and gravel or industrial sand and gravel duly approved by the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) and/or MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau) Regional Office, respectively."

DENR said sand and gravel count among the most extracted and widely consumed natural resources that need to be regulated.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said the new regulation aims to ensure increased transparency and accountability in the mining sector.

He added that the agency aims for the consistency in the implementation of the country's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System and the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

"It should be established that the ECC applicant is the same as that designated in the MPSA or FTAA," Paje said.

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Geohazard maps now available online

DETAILED landslide and flood geohazard maps which can help local government units (LGUs) prepare for calamities can now be viewed and downloaded for free through the Internet.

According to a statement released by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), users may now download, write a report on or share the geohazard maps in Facebook or Twitter. The use of geohazard maps will aid communities at risk in better preparing for natural disasters.

The maps can also serve as references for LGUs preparations

and for updating comprehensive land use plans.

Printed copies of the maps are set to be distributed nationwide this year. Since 2015, MGB has also been conducting intensive information campaigns to teach local communities how to make use of these maps.

Users may now directly view the maps by clicking on any of the two geohazard map icons found on the left side of the MGB Web page: the "Geohazard Web Portal" icon on the top portion and the "Geohazard Map Visualization on Google" icon on the lower portion.

The Geohazard Web Portal icon uses online base maps accessed from the Philippine Geportal System of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, while the Geohazard Map Visualization on Google utilizes Google Street Map and Google Earth, according to MGB.

The geohazard maps are the product of the National Geohazard Assessment Program. The program completed a 1:10,000 scale landslide and flood susceptibility assessment of 1,634 cities and municipalities in 2014.

— **Janina C. Lim**

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Bataan plans to break tree-planting world record

BALANGA CITY, Bataan – This province wants a crack at another record in the Guinness Book of World Records by surpassing Punjab, India which set the highest number of planted trees in a single day.

Vic Ubaldo, head of Bataan's Environment and Natural Resources Office (ENRO), and Raul Mamac, head of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO), are urging the public to join in the coming massive planting of trees on June 24, 2016, tentatively in Orion. The provincial executives plan to plant an estimated 400,000 seedlings with 10,000 volunteers.

Governor Abet S. Garcia, is spearheading the project and wants the public to support the endeavor.

Based on Guinness records, the most number of trees planted simultaneously in a single location was achieved by Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd (India), in Mansa, Punjab, India on October 30, 2015 where 208,751 seedlings were planted. A total of 5,928 participants took part in this record-breaking activity.

Ubaldo and Mamac expressed optimism that the province can surpass that record with the full support of Garcia and the public, particularly the young students as well as local and barangay leaders.

A few days ago, the ENRO set up an organizational and consultation meeting at the Bataan Peninsula State University-Main Campus, in preparation for the Bataan Green Legacy Program.

"Ito yung program kung saantina-target natin na magkaroon ng 8,000-10,000 volunteers para makapagtanim ng 400,000 seedlings sa loob ng isang oras. Ang isang tao ay kailangan magtanim ng 40 seedlings," said Ubaldo. (Mar T Supnad)

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Young boy saves lizard from rat, cat

By **FRANCO G. REGALA**

SAN FERNANDO CITY – A stunning lizard variant was bitten by a cat but was luckily saved and freed by a young boy who apparently wants to become a veterinarian in the future.

The lizard, with a tail of about 16 inches long and appears like a green crested lizard (*Bronchocelacristatella*) happened to have “dropped” from a mango tree after escaping from a rat, according to 13 year-old Jun Sison, who claimed to have seen the whole scene.

“Gumalaw yung puno akala ko nung una ahas tapos biglang may nahulog na daga at parang tuko. Tapos biglang humabol yung pusa at nahuli agad yung tuko,” explained the young lad to this reporter, who lives just across his house.

When he saw the cat biting the lizard, he said he rushed to stop the feline from further hurting the creature. The feline scurried away, leaving the poor lizard in shock with bite wounds on the

right part of the body. It did not move for two minutes, he added.

The teener from barangay Calulut later took a broom to help the lizard go up the mango tree. Onlookers who saw the creature suggested that he could have sold the lizard for a good price. Some, however, advised him to just leave it alone.

When asked why he set it free, Jun said: “Kawawa kasi baka may pamilya pa yun sa puno. Kung dadalhin ko naman sa [Department of Environment and Natural Resources provincial office] baka mamatay pa yun sa pagdala ko pa lang doon. Mahirap din alagaan kasi parang kakaiba siya.”

A Grade 9 student this upcoming school year at Calulut Integrated School, Jun said he loves animals particularly reptiles and crawling animals and would want to pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

Green crested lizards are endemic in the Philippines, particularly in Pala-

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Young boy saves lizard from rat, cat

wan and Luzon. These are also known to occur in other Asian countries such as Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Burma.

The species have a bright green body, sometimes possessing a blue

tint on the head. It usually grows to about 13 centimeters (5.1 inches) to 57 cm (22 in). The tail makes up over 75 percent of the total length. It is able to change color and turns dark brown when threatened.



Photo shows the injured green crested lizard rescued by a 13-year-old boy after being attacked by a wild rat and a native cat in Pampanga. (Franco G. Regala)

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Ilocos academe houses biggest eco park in N. Luzon

By **FREDDIE G. LAZARO**

LAOAG CITY – The Northwestern University (NWU) has put up its own ecotourism park and botanical garden which could be the biggest ecological park established in Northern Luzon's academe.

Michael Calaramo, the director of the Northwestern University-Ecotourism Park and Botanic Garden (NUEBG), the garden was realized as part of the corporate social responsibilities (CSRs) of the university to preserve the nearly extinct species of plants all over the world.

The primary objective for establishing the botanic garden is to develop a natural environment as a venue for scientific researches.

Located on a 7.8-hectare land in Barangay Payas-Samac, San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte, the garden showcases a wide spectrum of botanical species for scientific researches and related ecological activities.

To date, the garden has more than 2,100 species of flora. The collection ranges from tropical trees, flowering ornamental, dessert-succulent plants, ferns and allies, grasses and its allies, wild flowers, vines, parasitic, carnivorous, epiphytes, cycads and palms, crops and variegated cultivars.

Aside from Philippine endemic plants, the garden also boasts of foreign plant species that have adapted to the Philippine climatic condition.

"Due to its registration with the international agenda for plant conservation, the collections are only for conservation and not for sale or to be given away," said Calaramo.

The NUEBG follows several structures, protocols, and conventions on the establishment of botanic gardens.

"It is also called a systematic garden

because of its systematically arranged botanic specimen; and it is the only garden that is classified into a system with DNA-based systematic classification of plants," he said.

The NUEBG is a member of the Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI), the world's largest plant conservation network which aims to collect, conserve, characterize and cultivate samples from all of the world's plants as an insurance policy against their extinction in the wild and as a source of plant material for human innovation, adaptation, and resilience.

He explained the BGCI evaluates annually the collection in the NUEBG wherein every botanic garden that participates in global strategy plant conservation program will submit an annual list of updated and recorded plant specimen.

Moreover, the botanic garden also aims to maintain its integrity as a model for community development.

The garden offers a herbarium and a garden theater wherein outdoor trainings and classes are being held.

The NUEBG also converted its conference hall into a Museum of Natural History that exhibits a wide array of mollusks, insects, reptiles, mammals, fishes, rocks, and minerals including corals.

Aside from its scientific aspect, the garden's visitors may also enjoy recreational activities that are closely linked to the study of natural history and wildlife such as bird watching, butterfly watching, nature photography, mountain biking and other recreations like camping.

Calaramo noted that the NUEBG is distinct from other tourist destinations in the province due to its wide range of eye-catching natural features.

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'Adopt a creek' drive

BUTUAN CITY – With focus on environmental protection especially on the threat of global warming and climate change, more innovative measures have been set up such as "Adopt a Creek" to avert threat on creeks and river deterioration. Paying special attention to proactive measures that are aimed at mitigating negative environmental impacts, environmentalists and specialists are now eyeing more effective measures that will protect the citizenry, especially those living in vulnerable areas. To let other local government units (LGUs) and industrial sectors follow, an Adopt A Creek Program (ADCREP) was adopted in Agusan del Sur, the landlocked province in northeastern Mindanao region. The Environment Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), along with the LGUs in the municipalities of Rosario and Bunawan in Agusan del Sur, helped strengthen the innovative action of Philsaga Mining Company (PMC) the pilot company of ADCREP in Mindanao. The PMC, barangay and community environment and natural resources office (ENRO) in the municipality of Bunawan recently inked a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the adoption of water body of Agsao Creek in relation to the ADCREP located at Upper Consuelo in Bunawan, Agusan del Sur. (Mike U. Crismundo)

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La Niña post-El Niño: Is PHL ready for deluge of misery?

By RENE ACOSTA, DAVID CAGAHASTIAN, MANUEL T. CAYON, REA CU, JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ, LENIE LECTURA, RECTO MERCENE, CLAUDETH MOCON-CIRIACO, JONATHAN L. MAYUGA, CAI U. ORDINARIO, MARY GRACE PADIN & JOEL R. SAN JUAN

MANILA and Davao City—Two names make many people cringe in fear: Ondoy and Yolanda. These are the names of supertyphoons that brought misery, even nearly seven years after Typhoon Ondoy (international code name Ketsana) brought parts of Metro Manila under water.

After the heat, however, weathermen like Anthony Lucero are saying the country is facing a wet season under La Niña.

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (Pagasa) Lucero said there is a 50-percent chance of La Niña's developing after the onslaught of El Niño in the country.

"We will know for sure in July," said Lucero, Pagasa's climate monitoring and prediction section chief.

La Niña is characterized by the cooler temperature in the Equatorial Pacific and is associated with above-normal rainfall levels. The expert said in three out of four cases where a strong El Niño occurs, La Niña follows.

"This means there is a strong possibility that La Niña may occur after El Niño," Lucero said in a phone interview. El Niño, to note, is marked by unusually warm weather and could eventually lead to drought.

Impact

WEATHER changes impact more the poor, especially those in rural areas.

While Cid Terosa of the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) School of Economics said La Niña would not be enough to dampen overall GDP, "it can impoverish many in the rural areas."

"La Niña will lower the contribution of agriculture to GDP growth even more," Terosa, UA&P senior economist, told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

He noted that from 2011 to 2015, the contribution of agriculture to GDP growth was below 0.5 percent.

Terosa said the country should expect "about 1-percentage-point increase in the poverty rate" if La Niña hits the country.

However, Alvin Ang of the Ateneo de Manila University said, "The impact won't be so much on agriculture but will be more on the infrastructure and agriculture support." Ang, who teaches Economics at Ateneo, explained typhoons could boost government spending in La Niña-affected areas.

"Offhand, the rains are welcome to replenish the catch basins as long as no significant storm will occur," Ang told the BUSINESSMIRROR. "Nonetheless, government, particularly LGUs [local government units], must fully survey their areas to ensure that whatever damage comes will be minimized."

Spending

ACCORDING to Communications Secretary Herminio B. Coloma Jr., the government is "implementing a comprehensive program on mitigating the harmful effects of the possible onset of the La Niña scenario as part of its overall strategy on climate-change resiliency."

"This covers agriculture, flood control and disaster risk-reduction measures at the grassroots level," Coloma said.

Under the 2016 national budget, a total of P129 billion has been allocated for disaster risk-reduction programs. This amount is 4.3 percent of the total budget for 2016.

Of this amount, P59 billion will go to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to construct and maintain 1,090 structures nationwide. About P503.8 million will go to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to repair and construct 66 flood and drainage structures in Metro Manila.

Other portions of the budget are also appropriated for measures that can indirectly provide relief to possible victims of the La Niña phenomenon.

The administration of President Aquino also embarked on a greening program which reforested 683,483 hectares of land during the past six years, aside from allocating at least P129 billion to directly address the possible effects of the La Niña phenomenon expected this year.

According to figures from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), some 683,483 hectares of land were reforested from 2011 to 2013, or more than 250 percent more than the reforested land during the 10 years of the Arroyo administration.

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The national greening program will be allotted P8.2 billion to buy 415.46 million seedlings, which will be planted over 246,524 hectares of land; while P397 million will be spent for the training of local government officials under the geohazard assessment program, which will come up with geohazard maps detailing the risk assessments and educate barangays on the use of these maps.

NDRRMC

THE National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) announced it is stepping up its preparations for the rainy season, wary the La Niña may bring monsoon rains that could trigger Ondoy-like flooding in Metro Manila.

NDRRMC Spokesman Romina Marasigan said this early they have been coordinating with the local disaster offices around the country, reminding them to step up and revisit their respective disaster-preparedness plans for the rainy season and even for other calamities.

At the same time, the NDRRMC is using the coordinative effort to determine and identify the gaps in all of the disaster plans of the local, provincial and regional disaster offices and assist them in fixing them or ask them to make readjustments as needed.

"Our coordination with local disaster offices and even officials is continuing in order to make sure that they are ready and prepared for the rainy season, including against typhoons and even possible flooding," Marasigan said.

She said a full council meeting has been scheduled in the middle of June to assess the preparation and readiness of the government for the rainy season and La Niña, with the possibility of stronger typhoons as scenarios.

Initially, part of the disaster-preparedness plans has been the initiation of flood-control measures, particularly in Metro Manila, wherein silted creeks and waterways were cleaned and de-clogged of trash and other debris.

Around the country, equipment and supplies have been moved and prepositioned for humanitarian assistance and disaster response, while additional evacuation centers were put up, cleaned and identified.

"These [steps would] ensure we will have effective response once strong typhoons struck and the possibility of flooding occurs," Marasigan said, adding the NDRRMC is also communicating and coordinating with other agencies of the government without letup for the preparation.

Chief's review

THE incoming chief of the country's two disaster-response agencies said he would review the current direction of the disaster preparations and forecasting with focus on plucking out the best highlights during the worse disasters that ravaged the country so far.

Retired Brig. Gen. Ricardo Jalad, named to head the NDRRMC, said he would be interested to look at why the Army "seemed to be the last recourse and resort during calamities."

"It's the experience of the Army that it is usually the one that eventually does most of the operations to reach the affected places and conduct rescue," Jalad said. "It's also the same with the non-governmental organizations that are also the first responders, rather than the government."

According to him, what is usually lost during disasters "are the capability cooperation and coordination of government agencies."

Jalad said this commonly happens "because the rescuers and many government personnel have become victims themselves."

When asked why it was usually the Army that could act quickly, Jalad said "it is because of our location away from disasters."

He said he would also study the practice of the Compostela Valley provincial government when it would move its rescue and disaster teams away from the path of the typhoon, for instance, to enable them to move easily and quickly to

P129B

The total amount allocated under the 2016 national budget for disaster risk-reduction programs

the ground zero of the disaster.

Jalad said he would use the strength and capability of the two disaster agencies under him, the NDRRMC and the Office of Civil Defense, of which he is the executive director.

For now, the directions of the two agencies are "to improve capabilities of rescue and disaster teams, and to strengthen the coordination among government agencies."

Jalad was the commander of the 2nd Mechanized Brigade stationed in Iligan City when Typhoon Sendong struck northern Mindanao in 2011 and killed or sent missing almost 2,000 residents. Iligan City was one of the hardest hit by that typhoon.

Jalad was later assigned as the commander of the 5th Infantry Division in Isabela.

MMDA skeptical

HOWEVER, an official of the MMDA expressed doubts the metropolis is ready for another Ondoy-like disaster.

Bal Melgar, MMDA Flood Control and Sewerage Office chief, said the agency is exerting all efforts not to let another type of disaster become a bitter lesson for urban dwellers.

Melgar said the agency's flood-control team continuously cleaned, desilted and dredged rivers, canals, ponds, creeks, esteros and other major waterways all over the metropolis. He said there are 273 creeks and rivers they focused their energy into.

Melgar noted that uncontrolled dumping of waste was one of the aggravating factors during the massive flooding brought by Ondoy in 2009.

The cleanup of waterways aimed to maximize Metro Manila's waterways being able to convey bigger volumes of flood waters, he explained.

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Melgar also assured that all 54 MMDA pumping stations are fully functional. Each engine, he said, is capable of pumping 350 drums of flood water per second.

"These pumping stations are vital for flood mitigation because Manila's elevation is only a little higher than the main sea level," he explained.

Melgar pointed out there is a design capacity within the flood-control structures, enabling the excess waters to overflow and cause flood when they reach their limit.

"Our flood-control structures have a design capacity that can only accommodate a certain rainfall intensity," he explained. But the MMDA has yet to use the newly installed pump engines.

Melgar reiterated his call for households to adhere to the door-to-door garbage-collection scheme where they can only take out their refuse when the garbage trucks arrive.

The MMDA said that the majority of the more than 8,000 metric tons of garbage collected in Metro Manila on a daily basis is comprised of plastic.

Local initiative

AN official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) believes LGUs could be more prepared against rain-induced disasters, such as flood and landslide, if their respective personnel use geohazard maps.

Director Leo Jasareno of the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said if properly used, the geohazard maps will help LGUs minimize casualties and make communities more resilient to natural calamities.

The geohazard maps, at 1:10,000, are in place for rain-induced floods and landslides, according to Jasareno.

"As the records will show, based on the most recent strong typhoons like Lando, the level of preparedness of LGUs has been demonstrated," Jasareno said. "Iyong acid test ng LGUs during the past big typhoon incidents shows that they have shown preparedness."

According to Jasareno, Central Luzon is still the most flood-prone regions in the country. Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Bulacan are among the most vulnerable.

"In general, the entire Central Luzon is the most flood-prone," he said, citing the National Capital Region (NCR) as one of these areas.

Some parts of Isabela, including Ilagan, which is attributable to the overflow of the Cagayan River, are also prone to massive flooding, as is Mindoro Oriental.

In Mindanao, Jasareno cited Maguindanao, Agusan del Norte and Butuan. Towns in Southeastern Mindanao should also be ready for potential landslide events, Jasareno said.

Prone to landslides are towns in the eastern seaboard from Nueva Vizcaya, Aurora and Quezon in the Cordillera region, including Benguet and Southern Leyte.

Market readiness

ACCORDING to the Department of Finance (DOF), the insurance industry has evolved and learned from the bitter lessons brought by Ondoy and Yolanda.

Finance Undersecretary Gil S. Beltran noted that interest rates had minimal or no movement after Ondoy and Yolanda hit the country. Time deposit and lending rates decreased, according to Beltran, undersecretary on policy development and management services group.

"Interest rates barely moved after Ondoy and Yolanda," he told the BUSINESSMIRROR. Beltran explained that in 2014 after Yolanda, time-deposit rates even declined from 1.5 percent in November 2013 to 1.1 percent the next year.

He said lending rates "also declined from 5.7 percent to 5.6 percent early the next year."

Beltran also explained that after the country experienced the typhoons, the volume of loans being borrowed increased from 7.6 percent in November 2013 to 8.9 percent by December of that year. This was partly due to the increase in number of people needing financial services or assistance after the calamity.

"If at all, loan volumes rose by 8.9 percent in December 2013, from 7.6 percent in November, when the typhoon struck," he said.

Beltran said the insurance industry is better prepared now compared to when Ondoy and Yolanda hit, "in the sense that there is an increase in the coverage of microinsurance among the Filipino people."

According to him, there are now 37.5 million Filipinos covered by microinsurance, compared with the 20 million covered before Yolanda in 2013 and the 3.1 million in 2009 for Ondoy.

The continued developments in microinsurance and the broadening of its coverage in the country also better prepared the industry. It was also noted that the efforts of the Insurance Commission in fostering the developments for microinsurance aided in the preparation against problems La Niña can bring.

Power sector

ENERGY stakeholders, meanwhile, are set to hold meetings with owners and operators of power plants, particularly hydro, to discuss the measures that would be put in place to prepare for the rainy season.

"There are coordination meetings scheduled with plant operators of hydro," Energy Assistant Secretary Patrick Aquino said.

The National Power Corp. (NPC), which manages 17 large dams, including Angat, and 11 watersheds in the country, has launched an information, education campaign (IEC) in preparation for La Niña.

"Actually, we were already coordinating with the communities where the dams are nearby located to help them prepare for La Niña," NPC President Gladys Cruz-Santa Rita said.

She said the IEC focuses on flood forecasting and warning system for dam operation.

Aside from IEC, the NPC is currently conducting preventive maintenance of rainfall and water-level equipment to ensure efficient data gathering during events of severe weather disturbance.

It also regularly conducts dam-safety inspections to ensure stabil-

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ity and integrity of dam and appurtenant structures.

The NPC has also put in place emergency action plans with the coordination of the local government units.

Meanwhile, the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) declared it is fully prepared for La Niña. The utility firm said it continues to invest heavily on weather- and storm-resiliency projects for improved resiliency.

In particular, Meralco is currently replacing its wood posts to concrete or steel.

"It has been advised already that we are bracing for La Niña, anticipating severe weather conditions, including strong typhoons," Meralco Spokesman Joe Zaldarriaga said. "*Patuloy ang investments namin sa aming* distribution facilities, making sure we are ready to face any type of weather condition."

Customs

FOR the Bureau of Customs (BOC), Commissioner Alberto Lina said there is a need for the agency to hire a meteorologist to alert them of incoming typhoons and prepare them for possible disruptions of port operations in the country.

"So that if there would be a typhoon, whether there is a Customs district there or not, we would know," Lina said in justifying the need for a meteorologist.

Lina admitted that knowing the changes in the weather is crucial in the agency's day-to-day operations.

However, he said currently there is a shortage of meteorologists in the country, as some of the experienced weather analysts from the Pagasa have sought greener pasture.

"If there is heavy flooding, we have no [revenue] collection [because there is no operation so we are] affected," Lina lamented.

The hiring of meteorologists is being done even by some private logistics firms and airlines, he said.

Since the BOC is in the logistics, Lina explained, it is but logical for the agency to get a weather expert to advise them and help them plan early if there is an approaching bad weather.

Lina pointed out that monitoring the weather is very important and that even in some advanced countries, the first thing that people watch on television when they wake up in the morning is the weather channel.

While disaster preparedness is beyond the BOC's initial scope, the agency can assist in expediting the logistical requirements of goods intended for those affected by calamities.

During the onslaught of Yolanda, the BOC issued a memorandum enjoining all personnel to consolidate all efforts in the solicitation of relief goods they intend to donate.

The agency also tasked the General Services Division and the Customs Police Division to ensure the proper security, storage and movement of goods within the BOC compound at the Port Area.

Foreign aid

DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Spokesman Charles Jose said that in the aftermath of Yolanda, the "Philippine government further developed its disaster risk-reduction management system, which includes its capability to process and efficiently implement foreign aid."

The DFA, as a member-agency of the response cluster of the NDRRMC, is the lead agency of the International Humanitarian Assistance Cluster (IHAC).

The IHAC's core members include the DFA, the OCD, the departments of Education, Finance, Health, National Defense, Social Welfare and Transportation and Communications. It also has the BOC, Bureau of Immigration and officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as members.

The IHAC aims to ensure efficient and effective implementation of rules and regulations attendant to international humanitarian assistance.

Since its inception in the fourth quarter of 2014, Jose said IHAC has met seven times to draft the guidelines, which are being subject to finalization.

"The policies of these guidelines were developed in the aftermath of Yolanda and are primarily geared toward natural disasters," Jose said.

The guidelines that govern IHAC cover the three components of IHAC, namely, international humanitarian workers, financial donations and relief goods and equipment.

These guidelines primarily aim to provide coordination between the various agencies involved in IHAC, according to Jose.

Lawmakers speak

A LAWMAKER on Wednesday said the negative impacts of La Niña can be addressed through proper land-use planning.

House Committee on Agrarian Reform Chairman and Liberal Party Rep. Teddy Baguilat of Ifugao said the government should ensure all establishments are not located in hazardous areas.

"Both El Niño and La Niña are disastrous consequences of climate change," Baguilat said. "The negative impacts can be mitigated if we have proper land-use planning to ensure that residential and commercial establishments are not located in hazardous areas."

He cited the need to pass the National Land Use Act, which he said will also protect critical watersheds from being degraded further.

"Watersheds are important in minimizing erosions and landslides, which La Niña can engender."

The proposed act provide for a "rational, holistic and just allocation, utilization, management and development of the country's land resources to ensure their optimum use consistent with the principle of sustainable development."

House Committee on Climate Change Chairman and Party-list Rep. Rodel Batocabe of Ako Bicol said there must be a paradigm shift in the country's policy on treating La Niña or El Niño.

"These phenomena are the new normal which must be addressed continuously through continuing programs and appropriations," Batocabe said. "It is not enough that we just merely tag programs and projects as climate-change projects."

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Currently, Batocabe said the budget for the various climate-change mitigation and adaptation programs of the government, particularly those aimed at ensuring food security, was included in the 2016 General Appropriations Act.

The Pagasa has warned that climate change might affect food production in the country as the dry and wet spells brought about by El Niño and La Niña will greatly and directly impact the agricultural production.

The Joint House Special Committees on Food Security and Climate Change, citing Thelma Cinco, head of Pagasa's impact assessment and applications section, said the country will experience an average of 19 weather disturbances yearly, especially during the last quarter of 2016.

According to Pagasa's Lucero, if La Niña does develop, the Philippines would feel its full impact by November to February 2017. He identified 10 provinces lying along the eastern coast of the country as the most vulnerable during this period.

The weather agency is "working with our regular budget," he said, adding Pagasa also received about P450 million as replenishment for its quick-response fund.

Such fund, however, has already been fully utilized for rehabilitation efforts after Lando and Nona, as well as El Niño, he said.

The decision to implement other interventions, as well as the request for additional budget, may be left to the next administration, DA Field Operations Service Director Christopher Morales told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

Roehlano M. Briones of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), meanwhile, said the next administration need not worry as despite El Niño's wrath, the economy grew.

Even after El Niño had a large local effect in the agriculture sector and area, "*nakita mo naman buong economy nag-grow 6.9 percent year-on-year on quarter one*," Briones, PIDS senior fellow, told the BUSINESSMIRROR. "So even at its worst, GDP as a whole, *maaaring* not that strong *ang* impact [of La Niña]. The worst case will be we'll have a similar contraction of agricultural GDP because of the La Niña."

Briones further explained that after recovering under a rainy season, "*magkakaroon* ng continued contraction."

"I'm not that pessimistic *kasi* flooding I think is more of an urban problem compared to the impact [of La Niña] on agriculture," he said. "It takes a lot of flooding to seriously damage a rice crop *kasi* it's really a water-intensive crop."

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BAGAMA'T opisyal nang inihayag ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) na nagsimula na nga ang panahon ng tag-ulan sa buong bansa, kinakailangan parin ang ibayong pagtitipid sa tubig ng mga nasa Metropolitan Manila. Alam n'yo bang nasa 185.37 meters na lamang ang antas ng tubig sa Angat dam nitong May 30, 2016 na malayo mula sa normal range 212 meters.

Kaya naman todo na ang pagbabantay ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) sa naturang dam upang maiwasan ang pag-abot nito sa critical level na 160 meters para sa drinking water at 180 meters para sa irrigation.

Lubhang mahalaga ang Angat dam para sa mahigit

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

MAGTIPID SA TUBIG KAHIT TAG-ULAN NA

sampung milyong naninirahan sa National Capital Region (NCR) dahil 97% ng domestic water needs ang nagmumula rito at nagpatubig ito sa 27,000 ektarya ng agrikulturang lupain sa mga lalawigan ng Bulacan at Pampanga.

Panawagan ni Dr. Sevil-lo D. David, Jr., executive director ng NWRB at water concessionaires na nagsisilbi sa NCR, tipid-tipid parin sa tubig dahil kahit halos araw-araw nang umuulan ay hindi parin sapat ang taas ng

tubig sa Angat dam.

Inaasahan naman ng PAGASA na mas maraming ulan ang bubuhos sa buong bansa sa pagsapit ng buwan ng Agosto kung saan ay mas lalakas ang bugso ng hanging habagat na mas patitindihin dahil sa inaasahang epekto ng La Niña phenomenon. Kabaliktaran ito ng El Niño na unti-unti nang nawawala sa ating bansa kaya't asahan naman ang mga pag-ulan.



Govt drafts program to deal with La Niña

By Sandy Araneta and Lance Baconguis

THE provinces of Isabela, Quezon, Bicol Region, Samar, Leyte, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Compostela Valley and Davao Oriental are especially vulnerable to the effects of La Niña even as the Palace has prepared what it deems a comprehensive program to mitigate its effects.

La Niña is a weather phenomenon characterized by unusually cool ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific.

The program is part of the government's overall strategy on climate change resiliency, said Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr.

"This covers agriculture, flood control and disaster risk reduction

measures at the grassroots level," he said.

Meanwhile, the Department of the Interior and Local Government has tasked all local government units to carry out their disaster preparedness measures as the rainy season begins.

Secretary Mel Senen Sarmiento, in a directive, urged all provincial governors, city and municipal

mayors, and DILG regional directors to take precautionary measures in their respective areas of responsibility.

Sarmiento also reminded LGUs to implement the early preparedness actions listed in the Operation Listo Manuals for hydro-meteorological hazards. These are contained in the checklist of critical preparations for mayors, checklist of early preparations for mayors, and checklist for municipal local government operations officers, chiefs of police, and fire marshalls.

These manuals lay down disaster preparedness minimum standards before, during, and after a disaster.

State weather bureau Pagasa released a statement saying that it has activated its La Niña Watch.

If the climate condition does not change, the impact of La Niña will

be felt in the last quarter of 2016, according to Anthony Lucero, officer-in-charge of Pagasa's Climate Monitoring and Prediction Section.

He added, however, that La Niña isn't all bad news, especially in drought-hit areas.

"On the other side of the coin, La Niña also has benefits... It is possible to grow crops in sloping areas and mountainous areas, and we can raise crops in areas that cannot be reached by irrigation. So there are also benefits if we are to prepare early as now, even if there is no La Niña yet," Lucero said.

"We have to take precautionary measures. We should plan ahead so that we can mitigate the adverse impacts of La Niña. If our areas are flood-prone, then we should think of how we are to avoid hazards that may happen," Lucero said.



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Palasyo naglatag ng programa **HANDA NA VS LA NIÑA**

HANDA ang pamahalaan sa matinding epekto ng La Niña o matinding pagbaha matapos ang El Niño phenomenon.

Ayon kay Communications Sec. Sonny Coloma, nagpapatupad na ang gobyerno ng komprehensibong programa para maibsan ang inaasahang epekto ng La Niña.

Aniya, partikular na pinagtutuunan ang sektor ng agrikultura, flood control at disaster risk

reduction sa grassroots level.

Sinabi ni Coloma na nakapaloob ang lahat ng ito sa pangkalahatang istrategiya ng gobyerno laban sa epekto ng climate change.

"As part of its overall strategy on climate change resiliency, go-

vernment is implementing a comprehensive program on mitigating the harmful effects of the possible onset of the La Nina scenario. This covers agriculture, flood control and disaster risk reduction measures at the grassroots level," ani Coloma.



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Ph handa raw sa La Niña

TINIYAK ng Palasyo na handa ang pamahalaan sa banta ng La Niña na in-aasahang manalasa sa bansa pagkatapos ng epektong dulot ng El Niño.

Ani Communications Sec. Herminio "Sonny" Coloma, nakalatag na ang komprehensibong plano laban sa La Niña.

"As part of its overall strategy on climate change resiliency, government is implementing a comprehensive program on mitigating the harmful effects of the possible onset of the La Niña scenario," aniya.

Idinagdag ni Coloma na partikular na iniha-handa ng mga kaukulang ahensiya ay ang epekto ng La Niña sa agrikultura.

"This aldo covers flood control and disaster risk reduction measures at the grassroots level," aniya pa. —*Bella Cariaso*



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Climate dialogue set in Geneva next week

The Philippines has initiated the holding of a high-level dialogue on climate change and labor with unions and employers' organizations in order to look at possible policy implications of a changing climate next week in Geneva.

As president of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, the Philippines arranged the dialogue to be held on the sidelines of the International Labor Conference on June 8.

The possible policy implications of a changing climate that will be looked into include changing thermal conditions in the workplace that can affect the health of workers and the productivity of businesses in industries with exposed populations, such as agriculture and construction.

"Addressing climate change means addressing it in all possible avenues," said Ambassador Cecilia Rebong, permanent representative of the Philippines to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva.

"The fact that its impact can be felt in all aspects of our lives demands that we give it commensurate attention even in sectors not often associated with environment-related concerns," she added.

Meantime, enhanced engagement on climate change with other critical sectors was the focus of a CVF meeting chaired by the Philippines. The forum groups 43 developing and vulnerable countries that aim to provide a platform for

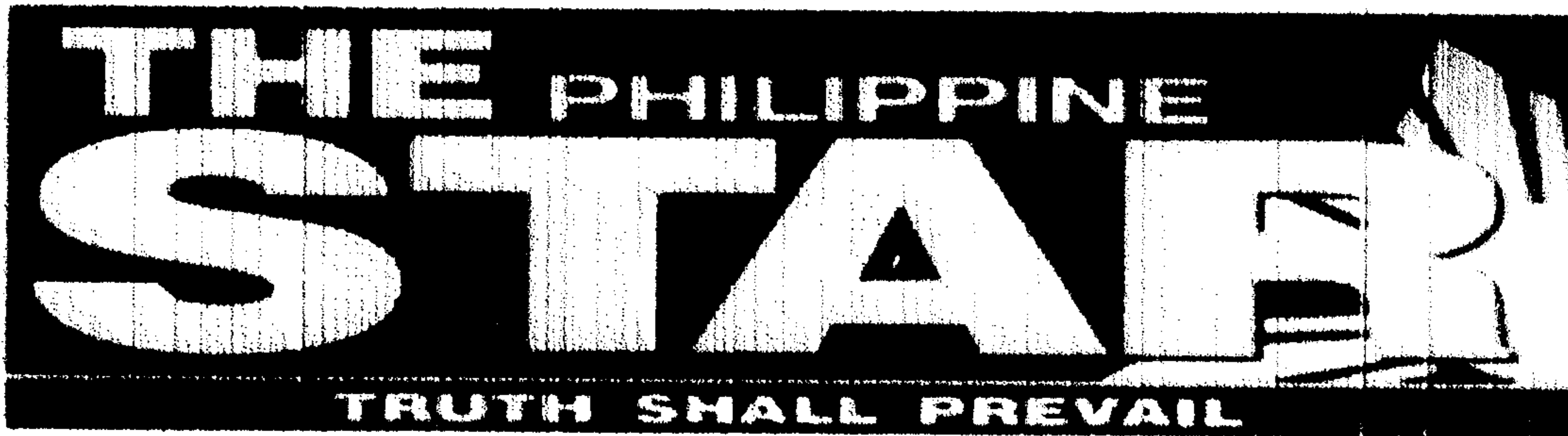
exchanging information and best practices on how best to address climate change.

Rebong led the discussions on three events lined up to explore the intersections between climate change and the individual sectors of disaster preparedness, health and labor.

The Philippines took part in the Roundtable on Managing Natural Disasters and Climate Change during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul from May 23 to 24.

The CVF is expected to share its experience in the opportunities and challenges related to financing, with a view to increasing the preparedness of developing countries in responding to hazards.

— Pia Lee-Brango



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Foreign partners eyed for Benham Rise survey mapping

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is seeking foreign assistance for an ambitious plan to undertake a resource mapping survey on Benham Rise.

Carlos Primo David, executive director of DOST's Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technologies Research and Development (PCIEERD), said that talks with a Japanese firm are underway.

The Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) last February had

expressed interest in working with DOST-PCIEERD to explore Benham Rise, which borders the deep of Japan in the north Pacific.

South Korea's Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST) had also expressed interest in providing assistance to the Philippines on an exploration effort in the area.

The two Asian powerhouse economies are both aggressively pursuing deep water mining.

In 2011, the Japanese government started a program funded with a

six-billion-yen budget to identify resources in their deep seas in southern waters bordering the Philippines. This yielded data that they have \$4 trillion worth of resources composed of hydrothermal deposits, methane hydrates, polymetallic nodules and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts.

DOST-PCIEERD was able to bring experts from JAMSTEC and KIOST into the country when it organized the 1st Philippine Deep Sea Resources Summit last February at the Crowne Plaza Manila

Galleria in Ortigas, Quezon City.

David said that the DOST plan was in the early stages of mapping Benham Rise, pointing out that this was precisely the reason he staged the summit last February.

"We are not a small country. We are a large ocean nation. Our territory is much bigger than our total landmass," David pointed out.

"Resources in the deep sea can very well fuel our economic growth in the not so distant future," he added.

— Rainier A. Dela Cruz

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Forest-destroying palm oil powers cars in EU

PALM OIL produced on tropical plantations that drive deforestation has become a major biofuel for vehicles in the European Union (EU), industry figures released on Tuesday by an environmental group revealed.

In 2014, nearly half of the palm oil used in Europe wound up in the gas tanks of cars and trucks, according to data compiled by the EU vegetable oil industry association Fediol, and obtained by Brussels-based NGO Transport & Environment.

Second only to rapeseed as a biofuel, overall palm oil use in

EU countries jumped six-fold from 2010 to 2015, accounting for a 34% increase in biodiesel consumption during that period, the figures showed.

Palm oil is also found in food, animal feed and cosmetics, but use in these sectors has dropped in Europe, in part due to pressure from environmental groups on major corporations.

Up to now, how palm oil was distributed across products in the EU was not known.

"We now know why the industry is withholding these numbers," said Jos Dings, ex-

ecutive director of Transport & Environment.

"They show the ugly truth of Europe's biofuel policy, which drives tropical deforestation, increases transport emissions, and does nothing to help European farmers," he said in a statement.

Rules set in place in 2009 require that 10% of energy for transport in all EU countries comes from renewable sources by 2020.

In practice, that has meant biofuels, since electric-powered vehicles account for a negligible percentage of energy in the transport sector.

Recent research, however, has shown that the climate impact of so-called "first generation" biofuels — mainly rapeseed, palm, sunflower and soy oil — is in fact greater than for fossil fuels, once deforestation is taken into account.

These biofuels also compete for ever-scarcer land needed to grow food.

Produced mostly in Malaysia and Indonesia, palm oil causes three times more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy than diesel fuel, according to a recent analysis. — **AFP**

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1968

MANILA BULLETIN

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

UN environment assembly adopts 25 resolutions to revitalize green agenda

NAIROBI (PNA/Xinhua) – The second edition of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) has adopted 25 broad resolutions to reactivate green and sustainable development.

Delegates who included ministers, policymakers, industry executives and campaigners from 174 countries endorsed a raft of resolutions to address air pollution, marine litter, chemical waste and wildlife crimes at the end of the five-day meeting in Nairobi.

“The environment will always be at the heart of humanity's prosperity, and what we have witnessed in the last five days is the same political will and passion for change that brought about the groundbreaking international

agreements of 2015,” UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said in a release after the meeting.

He added that attention to pressing environmental challenges will be elevated a notch higher thanks to the adoption of the resolutions.

“We expect to see bold and decisive commitment observed at UNEA-2 transmitted at national level to drive forward the 2030 agenda and ensure a brighter future for people and planet,” said the UNEP Chief.

The theme of UNEA-2 focused on delivering the environmental dimension of sustainable development goals adopted by UN member states in September last year.

Delegates also discussed strategies to hasten implementation of Paris climate

deal adopted in December last year.

The 25 resolutions adopted at the global environment assembly oblige governments, private sector and civil society actors to strengthen partnership in order to re-energize the green agenda.

Delegates agreed that nation states should establish innovative measures to combat the emerging environmental threats including ocean pollution, poaching, and air pollution.

The resolutions also paid special attention to the impact of armed conflicts to the environment and urged countries to take appropriate measures to halt ecosystems depletions in global hotspots.

The need to adopt sustainable production and consumption patterns to curb food waste was also highlighted in the resolutions.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Aerial surveys document ocean debris around Hawaii

HONOLULU (AP) – A study of the eight main Hawaiian Islands shows that ocean debris regularly accumulates around the archipelago, and that most of it is not linked to the March, 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, state officials said Tuesday.

The aerial survey shows that much of the debris that accumulates on the shores of Hawaii is from items discarded carelessly across the Pacific, officials with the state Department of Land and Natural Resources said in a statement. Ocean currents can bring trash from as far away as the US mainland and Asia to the shores of Hawaii.

“In order to characterize the potential ecological consequences of tsunami and other debris, it’s important to quantify it,” said Kirsten Moy, the state’s marine debris coordinator. “Understanding the types, sizes and locations of debris accumulating on Hawaiian coastlines is crucial in developing plans to streamline removal and mitigate negative impacts.”

The debris, mostly plastics but also wood, household goods, fishing gear, and other items, accumulates in hot spots around the islands, mostly on the north and east shores where ocean currents deposit the trash.

The study did not examine individual pieces of debris to determine where

they came from, but rather looked at the sizes and types of trash, as well as their locations, to determine what amount was produced by the 2011 tsunami and earthquake in Japan and what was not.

“This survey found a very limited amount of debris associated with the Japan tsunami,” said Suzanne Case, chairwoman of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. “Most of what was mapped is common, everyday items that someone haphazardly tossed onto the ground or directly into the water.”

The island of Niihau had the most debris in the state with nearly 8,000 pieces of debris counted. Oahu, the state’s most populated island, had the least amount of debris with just under 1,000 pieces, most of which was found on the island’s northeastern tip.

The survey was paid for by the Ministry of Environment of Japan using the Japan Tsunami Gift Fund and commissioned by the Department of Land & Natural Resources and North Pacific Marine Science Organization.

The 2011 magnitude-9.0 earthquake off the coast of northern Japan unleashed a massive tsunami. More than 19,000 people were killed, and power to a nuclear plant was cut off, triggering multiple meltdowns in the world’s

second-worst nuclear disaster.

Debris from the earthquake and tsunami has been found across the Pacific, including in Hawaii where Japanese boats and other items have washed ashore.

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This tiny frog is the world's most poisonous animal

THE golden poison dart frog is a very deceptive creature -- despite its tiny two-inch frame, it happens to be the most poisonous creature on Earth.

A single amphibian packs enough venom in it to kill over 10 adult men in about 3 minutes. In fact, the species gets its name from the native Emberá hunters of Colombia, who once used the frogs to make lethal blowgun darts.

The bright yellow frogs can only be found in small rainforest on the Pacific coast of Colombia, and their coloring can sometimes vary between yellow, orange, or pale green. The glamour of their appearance is a deliberate ploy, a tactic called aposematic or 'warning' coloration, to ward off potential predators. As proven by a 2001 study by Kyle Summers of East Carolina University in Greenville, the brightest frogs are always the most toxic.

Simply coming in contact with a golden poison dart frog doesn't necessarily put you in mortal dangers, as the amphibians only produce and excrete the potent toxin through their skin only when they feel threatened. But picking up one of these tiny creatures and holding it in your hand for more than a few seconds without gloves is suicide. The frog's skin quickly becomes covered in alkaloid poison (batrachotoxin) that has the ability to 'freeze' nerves, stopping them from transmitting impulses. Within minutes, the victim experiences uncontrollable muscle contractions and eventually heart failure.



Photo: Wilfried Böhm

Scientists have not been able to determine the exact reason behind the frog's extreme toxicity. They have traced its origins back 40 to 45 million years, in the forests of northern South America, and found that their ancestors were not poisonous. There is some speculation that the creatures did not generate their own poison, but ingested huge amounts of plant poisons, mainly carried by their prey -- flies, toxic ants, crickets, beetles, and termites. Their high metabolic rate could have allowed them to process the venom rather quickly, allowing them to withstand and even absorb it. This theory is further strengthened by the fact that poison dart frogs that are raised in captivity never develop any venom.

Interestingly, a 2014 study by Ralph Saporito of John Carroll University, Ohio, found that tiny tadpoles receive venom from their poison dart mothers, through a feed consisting of unfertilized eggs. The babies absorb venom through the feed and become poisonous themselves.

"Mom is able to provide them a defence by placing alkaloids in the eggs," Saporito explained. "It appears that the alkaloids in tadpoles are sufficient in deterring some potential arthropod predators such as hungry dragonflies." Their bright color, of course, stops predators from attacking in the first place.



Photo: Marcel Burkhard

Sadly, the magnificent golden poison dart frogs are an endangered species due to the widespread destruction of their natural rainforest habitat through deforestation, and illegal gold mining, cocoa cultivation, and logging. "Astonishing: we are on the edge of wiping out one of the most extraordinary and thrilling creatures on the planet," journalist Simon Barnes wrote in 2011. "We would all be much poorer without such a creature to give us nightmares."

To protect the species, international conservation charity World Land Trust set up the Rana Terribilis Amphibian Reserve in the wettest tropical rainforests of western Colombia. According to the organisation's website, "Living in the rich undergrowth of the reserve is a healthy population of Endangered Golden Poison Frog, one of the most extraordinary creatures on the planet. Just 55mm in size, this tiny vibrant creature carries a single milligram of toxin -- a small but lethal dose."

The website goes on to explain that the Emberá Indians learned how to use this poison to their advantage by gently brushing the tips of their arrows and darts on a frog's back without hurting it. Weapons prepared in this manner would remain deadly for over two years.

A BBC account, however, describes a more gruesome process of venom extraction from the poison dart frogs, which keeps its poison in glands beneath its skin. "Local people would 'catch frogs in the woods, and confine them in a hollow cane.' When they needed poison, they would take a frog and 'pass a pointed piece of wood down its throat, and out at one of his legs.' Unsurprisingly, the frog would become agitated, and begin sweating poison, 'especially on the back, which becomes covered with white froth.' The people dipped their arrows in this poisonous liquid, which remained potent for a year."



Photo: The World of Alligators

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Edible six-pack rings seek to limit harm to sea life

MIAMI (AFP) – A Florida brewery has done something bold to try to help the environment: Replacing the plastic six-pack rings that can harm sea life with edible ones.

Plastic rings – untold numbers of which end up in rivers and oceans – can be fatal to animals like fish, turtles and birds, and Saltwater Brewery thought there had to be a better way.

The Delray Beach craft brewery thinks it's found it: Turning wheat and barley left over from the brewing process into rings that are functional for thirsty people but also biodegradable and edible for animals.

This is "a six-pack packaging design that instead of killing animals, feeds them," said Chris Gove, president and co-founder of Saltwater Brewery.

"By using by-products of the beer brewing process such as barley and wheat, this packaging goes beyond recy-

cling and strives to achieve zero waste."

Nicholas Mallos of the Washington-based Ocean Conservancy praised the idea as a "great example of innovating" but said it's just one small step toward tackling a large problem.

"There is no single solution to the issue of plastic pollution," said Mallos. "We need a holistic approach that includes minimizing plastic waste, better managing plastic waste, and mitigating plastic pollution currently in the system through cleanups and physical intervention."

More than 690 species of marine animals have been impacted by plastic pollution in the ocean, he explained.

Plastic rings can harm animals by getting stuck in their guts, or entrapping smaller creatures.

About half of all the beer Americans drink is sold in cans, so this idea could be a significant start.

The Manila Times

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Can Duterte's Cabinet stay honest and clean?

BY RICARDO SALUDO
COLUMNIST

WHAT'S the biggest challenge facing the Duterte Cabinet? It is this statement from their chief: "I can assure you they are all men of integrity

and honesty."

President-elect Rodrigo Duterte's unequivocal assurance to Filipinos sets a high bar for his appointees, and each one will be sorely tested in the years ahead.

Not because any of them are predisposed

➤SaludoA5

no match; and as maker of a President of the Philippines, he probably had no equal.

But he was a very simple man. Though a perfectionist, especially with his speeches, he was not difficult to please. Like Vincent van Gogh, the great painter, he had a lust for life—from durian to beautiful women.

It was a friend of mine, Federico "Jun" Tabora, who introduced me to Secretary Raquiza, who wanted a young lawyer to represent him in the then headline grabbing Haruta case. This was a case where Raquiza, the Secretary of Public Works and Highways, and the whole membership of the Reparations Commission based in Japan were charged with graft and corruption for allegedly having received money from a Japanese construction company to undertake a public-works project in the country. Raquiza took the recommendation of my friend that I am a good trial lawyer, having finished my law at the UP College of Law and been tried and tested in the best courts in Mindanao.

That was how my friendship with Raquiza began. I was proud of him as my client and he was proud of me as his lawyer. It was almost a mutual admiration club between him and me. Admiration reached the highest levels when he learned that in a meeting of lawyers of the defense in the Hurata case,

presided over by Don Quintin Paredes, former senator and one of those knocking at the gates of the Nacionalista Party to be its presidential nominee years before, Don Quintin said: "Since you entrusted me to choose the lead counsel in this case, I chose Adaza, the Benjamin of the House."

Raquiza congratulated Tabora for recommending me to him as his lawyer.

Nineteen sixty-nine was an election year. Marcos was running for re-election. If the hearings at the Manila Fiscal's Office continued until the week before the elections, it was the feeling of knowledgeable politicians that Marcos could have lost to Sen. Sergio Osmeña, Jr., the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party. As one of the sharpest politicians in the old school, I have never known someone as good as he is. Being like that, he knew the catastrophic consequences to Marcos and the Nacionalista Party, if the hearings on the preliminary investigation would continue on a daily basis until the week before the elections.



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So Raquiza asked me to move for postponement of the hearings to a date after the elections. It was not an easy task since Osmeña was represented by giant legal luminaries of the Liberal Party, from Sen. Jovito "Jovy" Salonga to Sen. Estanislao "Taning" Fernandez. When I asked Salonga for the postponement of the hearings, he told me to ask Fernandez, since according to Salonga, Fernandez was really the one handling the case. I knew Salonga did not like Serging Osmeña. The principal reason, I believe, was that Salonga felt he was better qualified to be President of the Philippines than Osmeña. I also shared his belief.

When I asked Taning Fernandez for the postponement of the hearings, he asked me what Salonga said. I told him that Salonga said that it was up to him (Fernandez). So when I moved for postponement, the Osmeña panel did not offer any objection.

The hearings were set after the elections. Osmeña raged after knowing the postponement of the hearings. The rest is history; Marcos got re-elected.

The Manila Times

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Raquiza, who was at the Manila City Council Hall during the move for postponement, patted me at my back, like an excited warrior, and said, "Bono, excellent job. You will be rewarded."

One fine morning after the re-election of President Marcos, Raquiza asked me whether I would accept an appointment as Judge of the Court of First Instance (now Regional Trial Court) in the City of Manila. The position was honorable—then coveted by ambitious young lawyers as stepping stone to the Court of Appeals and, later, to the Supreme Court. I rejected the offer immediately without a second of reflection.

"Why?" Raquiza asked me.

"*Manong*, I cannot live on the salary of a CFI judge. If I accept the job, you're asking me, in effect, to be corrupt. I can't do that," I replied with noticeable vehemence in my voice.

"Then what do you want?" he replied.

"Ask the President to appoint me Secretary of Justice and I will send every grafter in this country to jail. If I can't do it in a year, I will hand in my irrevocable resignation. If I can't

do it within that time, nobody can," I answered his question with my usual bravado.

Raquiza almost died laughing and said: "He will not do that! Once you become Secretary of Justice, you will be knocking at the gates of Malacañang."

I laughed with him.

All conversations about rewards and appointments ended there. Raquiza never mentioned appointment to government positions again. That is how perceptive he was.

As if to compensate me for my performance as his lawyer, he told Congressman Roque "Alikabok" Ablan, Jr. to engage my services as counsel for Rufino "Totoy" Antonio in the famous or infamous Batanes election case. I accepted the case because of Raquiza's recommendation.

Totoy Antonio was pilloried by the local media for having allegedly terrorized the 11,000 voters into voting for him because of his boys riding Suzuki motorcycles on the islands of Batanes. His opponents claimed that the Suzuki boys used guns before and during the elections, even in the polling places. Florencio Abad, Sr., the head of the reigning political dynasty of that province, whose wife was the incumbent congresswoman and Antonio's opponent for the lone congressional district of Batanes, had the full support of the usually biased Manila media. Media painted Antonio as the head of a criminal gang terrorizing the province. But in the hearings before the Commission on Elections, this claim was proved untrue because there was not a single bullet hole in the polling places, neither was there convincing evidence that the voters were terrorized.

Soon after the Batanes case, the burning of Ora Este and Ora Oeste burst into the front pages of the country's national media where the son of the colorful congressman of Ilocos Sur, Floro "Floring" Crisologo, was charged with having burned two villages of that province. Again, on the recommendation of Secretary Raquiza to Congressman Crisologo, I was engaged as one of the lawyers of Crisologo's son, Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo, to argue the case in the Supreme Court on the question of venue of the trial.

In all these legal engagements, Raquiza proved he was not one to hesitate recommending a lawyer to his friends to handle controversial cases, if he knows that the lawyer has the ability to appropriately handle them. And friends of his, in more cases than one, never failed to accept happily Raquiza's

recommendation because Raquiza himself, a graduate of the College of Law of the University of the Philippines, was an outstanding trial lawyer.

A legendary story told of Raquiza as a trial lawyer is that Ferdinand E. Marcos, an outstanding trial lawyer himself, never won a case against Raquiza in the military courts after the Second World War. But in one case, Raquiza almost lost to Marcos because the president of the court martial that tried the case knew Raquiza as a philandering husband and the president of the court, a Colonel Reyes, was a very devout Roman Catholic.

During the trial, every time Raquiza objected to the questions of Marcos directed at the witnesses, Colonel Reyes always overruled Raquiza. When it was Marcos' turn to object to questions of Raquiza directed at the witnesses, Colonel Reyes sustained all Marcos' objections. As a gifted trial lawyer, Raquiza realized that if the trend of the trial continued, he would lose, for the first time, the case to Marcos. So Raquiza conducted a discreet inquiry into the person and character of Colonel Reyes. Raquiza found out that Reyes was a very devout Roman Catholic, attending mass every day and, most of the time, taking communion.

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In the next hearing, while arguing and perspiring in the presentation of his evidence, he brought with him his biggest rosary, which he concealed over a handkerchief in the right side pocket of his pants. Dramatically, he pulled the handkerchief to wipe his forehead and the rosary fell on the floor. The eyes of Colonel Reyes were transfixed on the rosary. Raquiza, who was also a church-going Roman Catholic, knelt on the courtroom floor, lifted the rosary and with all the passion he could muster, kissed the crucifix. Thereafter, all the objections of Raquiza were sustained; all the objections of Marcos were overruled. As expected, Raquiza won the case and Marcos lost.

This kind of creativity and sense of theater in Raquiza must have impressed Ferdinand E. Marcos. It must have been this kind of outstanding performance that endeared Raquiza to Ferdinand Marcos, especially with the emerging developments in the politics of their province—Ilocos Norte.

Raquiza and Marcos were elected congressmen representing different congressional districts of Ilocos Norte after the Second World War. While both of them

finished at the College of Law of the University of the Philippines, Raquiza was more endearing to the people than Marcos despite the fact that Marcos topped the bar examinations and Raquiza did not. Raquiza had winsome ways with the people. In the real sense, he was a man of the people—easy to approach and always listening to people's problems; ready with a smile and humorous stories; embracing everyone, not just shaking their hands.

During Marcos' bid for re-election, he requested Raquiza to help him in his bid for a second term.

"Tony, please help me in my re-election bid. Without your help, I'll surely lose the election," Marcos begged Raquiza.

"But I'm also running for re-election," Raquiza replied.

"You're a sure winner, everybody knows that. Leave your district and please campaign for me," Marcos said with urgency and desperation in his voice. Raquiza left his district to campaign for Marcos. True to the statement of Marcos, Raquiza ran away with his re-election and Marcos won because of Raquiza. This is how much Raquiza was a sucker for friendship. For the sake of friendship, Raquiza would even give his life away. It is not easy to find a man of that orientation and temperament, in any generation.

Still on the sacrifice Raquiza made in the name of friendship with Marcos. In the first attempt of Marcos to make a bid for a Senate seat, the Northern Alliance—composed of leaders in Northern Luzon—held a convention to select the senatorial candidate of the Liberal Party. Raquiza, the most popular and approachable politician, was nominated to represent the Northern Alliance in the LP senatorial slate.

Raquiza, in consideration of higher national interests, declined the unanimous nomination and declared on the floor of the convention to thunderous ovation:

"Ladies and gentlemen of this convention, allow me to thank all of you for your unanimous trust and confidence in me. I will win as senator because of your unanimous endorsement and support but I cannot become President. Let us send someone to the Senate who

one day will be President of the Philippines, my friend and your friend—Congressman Ferdinand E. Marcos!"

Ferdinand E. Marcos became senator, later President of the Senate and, eventually, President of the Philippines, thanks

to Secretary Antonio "Tony" Raquiza. There are not many men, in this country or any country for that matter, who make this kind of noble sacrifice for love of country. Raquiza is one of the very few of his kind, especially in our time when love of country has lost its meaning, not only among politicians but also among our people.

Raquiza has a wonderful record in Congress, not only in terms of significant laws passed but also in the Ciceronian nature of his speeches. One of the very significant laws passed by Raquiza is the Raquiza law. Not so many know this law. This is the prohibition of cutting trees without permission from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The inspiration of this law, Raquiza told me, is what he learned in one of his trips to Israel.

During that trip, he learned that an American philanthropist donated a hospital to the Israeli government. The condition of the donation—it had to be built in a specific spot in Tel Aviv, the capital of the country. Unfortunately for the donor, the spot chosen had a centuries-old tree. The donor insisted that the tree be transferred to another location and the hospital built on the designated spot. The Israel government refused the request and the hospital was built in some other location.

The Manila Times

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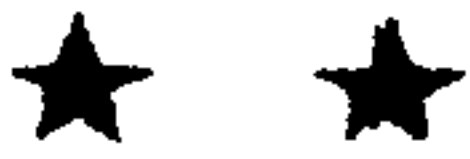
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Raquiza told me he learned a very important lesson on the preservation of the environment and an acute sense of respect for history. Almost all politicians in this country never learn this lesson. These politicians are responsible for illegal logging that has led to horrendous floods and unlimited destruction of the environment. It is these politicians who need to be destroyed if this country is to be saved from destruction—self-propelled or otherwise.

This deep concern for the environment and history as well as aesthetics was shown to me by Raquiza as we were crossing Taft Avenue on our way to the Manila Hotel.

"You know, Bono, whoever planned to construct a light railway transit (LRT) on Taft Avenue must have lost his sense of balance. Imagine, you have to cut centuries-old acacia trees—for what? Just to spoil the view of Taft Avenue! Could you ever imagine the French government allowing the construction of an LRT on Champs-Elysees? That is not only spoiling the environment and a historical landmark, that's an aesthetic disaster!"



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Celo Lagmay

SA pagbuo ni President-elect Rodrigo Roa Duterte ng kanyang Gabinete, nais kong balikan ang mga pamamaraan ng mga nakalipas na administrasyon sa paghirang ng kanilang mga kaalyado upang maging miyembro ng kanilang official family. Naging kaugalian na ito simula pa nang isilang ang Republika ng Pilipinas.

Ang aking paggunita sa nabanggit na sistema ng pagpili ay walang kaugnayan sa pagpapahayag ng bagong-halal na Pangulo ng mga miyembro ng kanyang Gabinete. Noon, ang estratehiya ng nakalipas na mga pangulo ay nakalundo sa kultura ng utang-na-loob. Totoo, isang sukdulan ng kawalan ng pagpapahalaga kung hindi tayo magpapasalamat sa mabuting nagawa ng ating kapwa, lalo na noong panahon ng kampanya. Kabilang dito ang mga kamag-anak, kaibigan, kamag-aral, kabarkada ng bagong pamunuan. Sila ang malimit na naitatalaga sa Gabinete at sa iba pang posisyon sa gobyerno. Katunayan, may ulat noon na kahit umano ang barbero ng appointing authority ay hinirang na maging miyembro ng isang government corporation.

Ang ganitong sistema ay nakalulungkot na madalas na humahantong sa mga kapalpakan at katiwalian ng mga appointee na bumabalandra naman sa pamamalakad ng administrasyon. At lalong nakalulungkot na ang naturang mga tiwaling opisyal ay hindi manlang masabihan at lalong hindi maitiwalag ng pangulo dahil nga ito ang paraan nila ng pagbabayad ng political debt: hindi sila tinitiwag kahit na ang administrasyon ay pinuputakti ng katakut-takot na pagtuligsa.

Noon, kabi-kabila rin ang paghirang ng mga miyembro ng Gabinete na ang mga kuwalipikasyon at kakayahan ay hindi angkop sa mga tungkulin na dapat nilang gampanan. Ang Kalihim ng Pagsasaka, halimbawa, ay walang karanasan sa agrikultura: hindi man lamang nakalusong sa bukirin, hindi nakakakilala ng mahusay at mabungang binhi, ng abono at iba pang agricultural implements. Ganito rin ang nangyayari sa iba pang larangan na tulad ng Department of Justice, Environment and Natural Resources, Labor, and Employment at iba pa.

Noon, may maituturing din naman na perfect appointment na batay sa integridad at katapatan. Sila ang nagiging sagisag ng marangal na paglilingkod sa bayan; sila ang produkto ng maingat na paghirang ng mga kaalyado ng presidente na tulad, marahil, ng susunod na administrasyon.