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Friday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Money-Go-Round

By VICTOR C. AGUSTIN

Gina Lopez buries RSA's Manila Bay reclamation plan



Lopez

The controversial plan of San Miguel president Ramon S. Ang to build either a new city or an airport from the waters of Manila Bay had been scuttled for good by Environment Secretary Gina Lopez.

Lopez has cancelled the environmental clearance certificate that would have allowed Ang's associates to reclaim 635 hectares of coastal waters along the

Parañaque-Las Pinas-Bacoor corridor, with the environmental activist-turned-Cabinet official favoring to expand instead a bird-and-fish sanctuary in the area.

Even before the Lopez order, Ang had all but given up his dream, given the unremitting opposition from Senator Cynthia Villar and left-wing groups, and has instead proposed to build his alternative international airport in Bulacan.

The Lopez order cancelled the ECC certificate granted to Alltech Contractors in 2011 by director Juan Miguel Cuna of the Environmental Management Bureau, who said he was doing so "by the authority of (then) secretary" Ramon Paje.

Earlier, Alltech had secured tedious approvals from both the Parañaque and Las Pinas city councils, promising an unspecified number of hectares for each city in return for supporting the reclamation.

The reclamation would have also subsumed three govern-

Ang gave up the chairmanship and presidency of Cyber Bay in late 2012, with his lawyers from the Gerodias Suchi-anco Estrella law firm taking over the board and management of the shell company.

From Lucio Tan critic to ally

From a staunch Lucio Tan critic, former finance undersecretary and public finance expert Milwida Guevara has now become — blush, blush — a Lucio Tan ally.

Guevara has voiced her alarm over a House bill creating a two-tier cigarette tax system being supported by Mighty Corp. which would create a perfect incentive for manufacturers to under-declare their sales, exactly the argument of the Philip Morris and Tan's Fortune Tobacco combine.

Guevara is not alone.

Even the fountain of NGO funding, the US Agency for International Development, is now literally in bed with the taipan, despite the latter having been in the cross-hairs of the USAID advocacy program "AGILE" at the turn of the century during the open-skies lobbying against Philippine Airlines.

Proof? USAID now holds offices, along with PAL, in Tan's very own Philippine National Bank complex on Diosdado Macapagal Avenue.

Money talks

- Lost amid the Yuletide merrymaking was the Supreme Court decision declaring as unconstitutional the 2012 order of then finance secretary Cesar Purisima and Internal Revenue commissioner Kim Henares imposing excise and value-added taxes on oil products brought into Clark and other economic zones.

The high tribunal agreed with then Pampanga Rep. Carmelo Lazatin that Revenue Regulation 2-2012 is invalid because the finance department effectively imposed taxes on tax-exempt enterprises, thus encroaching on the legislative power reserved exclusively by the Constitution on Congress.

- Taipan John Gokongwei has quietly ventured into the bus transportation business, creating a Robinsons Land subsidiary for the initial point-to-point bus service between his Galleria and Novaliches malls and Ayala Center.

Heard through the grapevine

The original wing of the upscale Shangri-La Plaza mall in Mandaluyong is seeing an increased level of retail space vacancies, led by the anchor Crossings department store, not seen since the mall's difficult beginnings during the 1990s.

E-mail: cocktales_tv5@yahoo.com.

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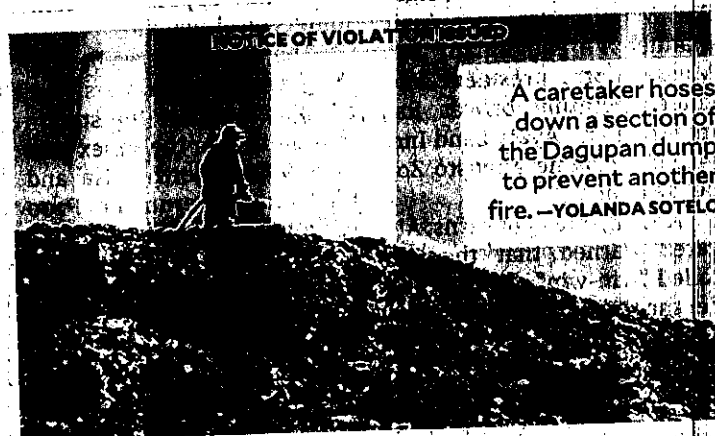
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



A caretaker hoses down a section of the Dagupan dump to prevent another fire. —YOLANDA SOTELO

EMB CLOSES DAGUPAN CITY DUMP AFTER 3-DAY FIRE

DAGUPAN CITY—The Ilocos regional office of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) has ordered the city government to stop operating its 4-hectare open dump, following a three-day fire that struck the area.

The fire, which started on Jan. 12, gutted half of the 10-meter high garbage in Barangay Boquig village, said Insp. Romie Tungpalan, city fire marshal.

But residents were alarmed after smoke continued to rise from the dump inside the Tondaligan People's Park near the city's beachfront.

Maria Victoria Abrera, EMB Ilocos director, said her agency had issued the city government a notice of violation two days before the fire.

She said she also met Mayor Belen Fernandez for a technical conference to assess the progress made in enforcing the city's solid waste management plan.

The city government plans to put up a waste-to-energy facility to be fueled by garbage at the open dump. It also plans

to relocate 30 families living around the site.

As of Wednesday, the Bureau of Fire Protection had not declared a "fire out" to signify that the blaze had been contained, after portions of the dump continued to smolder. Fire trucks, however, had been pulled out.

The BFP is investigating the cause of the fire but Tungpalan said the garbage could not have ignited on its own. While methane or carbon dioxide gases are combustible, the dump's contents would need to heat up to 580 to 600 degrees Celsius to burst into flames, he said.

"Somebody could have ignited the garbage either deliberately or accidentally, like throwing a lighted cigarette butt into the garbage pile," he said.

Abrera said: "They can no longer use the open dump, so they could practice segregation of garbage from source and establish waste facilities in the villages. But they should also guard against putting up mini dump sites." —YOLANDA

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Evacuees told: Not yet safe to return home

By MARS W. MOSQUEDA JR.

CEBU CITY – Families staying at evacuation centers in the city are being urged not to return to their homes just yet because landslides and flooding still pose a danger.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) office in Central Visayas said evacuees, especially those from mountain villages and living near riverbanks, should remain at evacuation centers until the weather clears.

MGB Information Officer Marian Cordilla said days of heavy rains had loosened the soil and could trigger landslides.

Weather forecasters said the rainy weather will continue in Cebu this week.

Evacuees from Sitios Kan-Irag and Kawagan in Barangay Sirao, one of the mountain villages where landslides were reported, were worried that they might not be able to go back to their homes at all. At least 100 families from Barangay Sirao have been evacuated since Saturday.

In the province of Cebu, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Manage-

ment Office (PDRRMO) received reports of minor landslides in 12 areas in southern, northern and midwest Cebu. These, however, did not cause extensive damage to property.

The landslides were recorded in the cities of Talisay and Naga and the municipalities of Barili, Sibonga, Alcantara, Dumanjug and Aloguinsan in the south; Pinamungajan and Balamban towns in the midwest; and Bogo City and the towns of Tabogon and Sogod in the north.

PDRRMO spokesperson Julius Regner said residents in the landslide-prone areas may be relocated, depending on the assessment and recommendation of the MGB.

The series of downpours has already affected flower and vegetable plantations in the hillside barangays of Cebu City.

City Agriculturist Apple Tribunalo said that while no flower and vegetable plantation was affected by landslide, the rains have transformed the soil into mud that rendered the plants susceptible to fungal diseases.

The City Agriculture Office sent inspectors to check the damage and provide seedlings and fertilizers to affected farmers.

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12 Benguet sites set for Minahang Bayan

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet.—The Provincial Mining Regulatory Board recently declared 12 areas in two towns of the province as potential "Minahang Bayan" sites.

Engineer Lumino Caniteng, president of the Benguet Federation of Small-Scale Miners, said 10 potential Minahang Bayan sites are in Itogon, while two others are in Tuba. These potential sites are existing small-scale mining areas, to avoid future complications with other existing claims, he added.

"We are now awaiting the action for validation by the environment department on the declared Minahang Bayan sites, for us to proceed with the processing of the required documents that will eventually lead to the formal declaration of the sites as Minahang Bayan areas," Caniteng stressed.

The 10 proposed Minahang Bayan sites in Itogon are equitably distributed in the different barangays, except for barangays Tinongdan and Dalupirip, which are classified as agricultural areas. The Minahang Bayan sites in Tuba are in Barangay Camp 4. **Dexter A. See**

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BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Legarda bats for regulation of plastic bags use to protect marine resources

BY BUTCH FERNANDEZ
@butchBM

TO help prevent oceans from carrying more plastic than fish as projected in one study, Sen. Loren B. Legarda on Thursday again called for the regulation of the use of plastic bags in the country.

Legarda made the statement after the Ellen MacArthur Foundation released a report, titled "The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics", which revealed that the world produced 20 times more plastic in 2014 (311 million tons) than in 1964 (15 million tons). At this rate, the report said oceans are expected to contain more plastic than fish (by weight) by year 2050.

"Nonbiodegradable plastic bags symbolize the throwaway culture that we have developed. We cannot go business as usual as it pollutes our oceans and water, and even

the air when burned," she said in a statement.

Legarda noted that the Philippines, together with China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, are considered among the top contributors of plastic trash dumped into seas.

The five countries are spewing out as much as 60 percent of the plastic waste that enters the world's seas, according to non-governmental organization Ocean Conservancy.

In line with this, Legarda filed the proposed Plastic Bags Regulation Act under Senate Bill 430, which aims to strictly regulate the production, importation, sale and use of plastic bags.

"This proposed measure discourages the use of plastic bags and encourages the use of native reusable bags made of organic or recycled materials, and reusable containers made of glass or non-toxic and nonhazardous materials," she said.

Under the bill, a point-of-sale store will be prohibited from providing the consumer with plastic bags for the purpose of carrying or transporting items or products purchased. This will put the use of single-use plastic bags to a minimum.

Only plastic bags that are used to contain fresh fish, meat and poultry products, and primary plastic packaging used to pre-pack food items and in the manufacturing of finished products for sale in the general market are excluded from the prohibitions under the bill.

The disposal and management of plastic waste will be done in accordance and pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act (RA) 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which Legarda principally sponsored and authored.

Legarda said the bill would also address the concerns of affected employees and workers of

the plastic industry.

The Department of Trade and Industry, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the Department of Labor and Employment will develop programs for alternative livelihood opportunities for the affected

routine and practices to produce a positive impact on our environment," Legarda said.

"Companies must change their economic mind-set, wasteful production processes and packaging methods—from the use of seemingly cost-effective plastic bags

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INITIATIVES SERVICE

Public urged to use eco instead of plastic bags

SENATOR Loren Legarda has deplored the result of an international study which showed that the country is considered among the "top contributors" of plastic trash dumped into the sea.

The Ocean Conservatory reported that aside from the Philippines, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, are "spewing out" as much as 60 percent of the plastic waste that enters the world's seas.

Legarda renewed her call for the regulation of the use of plastic bags to help prevent oceans from carrying more plastic than fish as projected in one study.

She noted a 2016 report, The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which showed that the world produced 20 times more plastic in 2014 (311 million tonnes) than it did in 1964 (15 million tonnes) and at this rate, oceans are expected to contain more plastic than fish (by weight) by the year 2050.

"Plastic bags are ubiquitous components of the world's consumer culture. These non-biodegradable plastic bags symbolize the throwaway culture that we have developed. We cannot go business as usual as it pollutes our oceans and water, and even the air when burned," she said.

Legarda earlier filed the proposed Plastic Bags Regulation Act under Senate Bill No. 430, which aims to strictly regulate the production, importation, sale and use of plastic bags.

"This proposed measure discourages the use of plastic bags and encourages the use of native reusable bags made of organic or recycled materials, and reusable containers made of glass or non-toxic and non-hazardous materials," she said.

Under SBN 430, a point-of-sale store will be prohibited from providing the consumer with plastic bags for the purpose of carrying or transporting items or products purchased. This will put the use of single-use plastic bags to a minimum.

Only plastic bags that are used to contain fresh fish, meat and poultry products, and primary plastic packaging used to pre-pack food items and in the manufacturing of finished products for sale in the general market are excluded from the prohibitions under SBN 430. The proposal would also address the concerns of affected employees and workers of the plastic industry.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) will develop programs for alternative livelihood opportunities for the affected employees and workers.

She said citizens should make conscious efforts to change daily routine and practices to produce a positive

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PLASTICS MAN - A man gathers discarded plastic bags in the polluted waters of the South Road Properties Channel which he will sell. The plastic materials will eventually be recycled. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

1,858 trees must go for MRT 7

By Jodee A. Agoncillo
@jagoncillo

A total of 1,858 trees, including narra, molave and ipil species which are on the endangered list, will "have to go" to make way for the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) 7 project, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official said on Thursday.

"MRT 7 is a priority project. In the first place, the trees were planted there without anticipating there will be engineering developments. We love the trees. We share the sentiment of the environmental groups but they have to go," said Sofio Quintana, DENR National Capital Region assistant director.

The 1,858 trees are found along the 23.17-kilometer-long development stretch for MRT 7 between SM North Edsa and Quirino Highway in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Of the 1,858 trees, 1,215 trees around 10- to 15-meters tall will be cut down; 623 will be earth balled while 20 trees will just be pruned, Quintana told the Inquirer.

Earth balling is the process of extracting the tree by dig-



CUT, BALLED OR PRUNED That's the fate awaiting these trees on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, where they stand in the path of the upcoming MRT 7 project. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

ging out its roots. The tree is then replanted.

Quintana said of the 1,858 trees that will be displaced, 528 trees are categorized as "premium" species.

These include narra, molave and ipil which are classified as endangered tree species by the

DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau.

"The cutting, balling and pruning cannot be avoided. Unfortunately, they have to go. But these trees can now be propagated easily," he added. "If you don't cut them, they will be an eyesore or a cause of

danger."

According to Quintana, they have already made a recommendation regarding the application submitted by EEI Corp. project manager Permo Saroza. It will also be submitted for approval to Environment Secretary Gina Lopez.

Quintana told the Inquirer that EEI Corp. would be required to replace every transplanted tree that dies with 100 seedlings.

Every tree that has to be cut will be replaced with 50 seedlings, for a total of 60,750 seedlings, he said.

The contractor is also re-

Quintana said the affected trees were part of the "adopt and plant a tree" programs that called for the greening of major thoroughfares.

The P69.30-billion MRT 7 project includes the development of a 23-km railway system with 14 stations from North Avenue, Quezon City to San Jose

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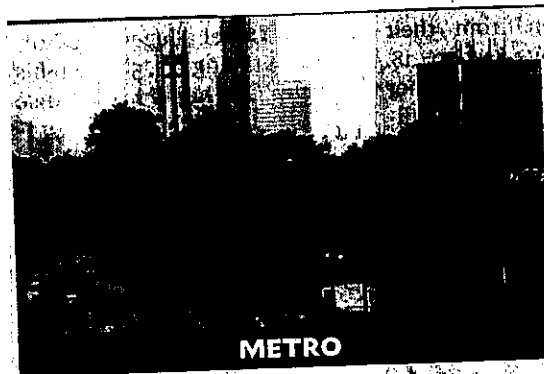
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"1,800 trees MRT 7"

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1,800 trees to make way for MRT 7

"They have to go," an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said on Thursday on the fate of some 1,800 trees on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, that stand in the way of the Metro Rail Transit 7 project. Each tree, however, will be replaced by 50 seedlings. —STORY BY JODEE A. AGONCILLO

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Abante

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Napisang pawikan ibinalik sa karagatan

Nasa 74 na napisang pawikan o baby turtles ang pinakawalan sa dagat sa Brgy. Guisguis sa Sariaya, Quezón kamakalawa ng hapon.

Sa pagtutulungan ng lokal na pamahalaan, mga residente at ng environmentalist group na Tanggol Kalikasan ay matagumpay na naibalik sa dagat ang mga malilit na pawikan na napisa sa baybaying dagat ng isang resort sa nasabing lugar.

Ayon kay Randy Alcantara, ang nakadiskubre sa mga itlog, naglilinis siya ng buhanginan nang makita niya ang mga ito.

Agad nila itong inilagay sa ligtas na lugar at binantayan hanggang sa mapisa.

Ito na ang ikatlong pagpapakawala ng mga napisang pawikan sa baybaying dagat ng Sariaya mula noong nakaraang Disyembre.

Kasabay ng pagpapakawala ng mga pawikan ang paglalagay ng mga "signages" upang mas maraming mamamayan ang makaalam, mas madagdagan pa ang kaalaman at malasakit sa pangangalaga ng kalikasan lalo't higit ang mga buhay ng ilang kayaga ng mga pawikan. (Ronilo Dagos)

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Man's closest relatives face threat of extinction

WASHINGTON—Gorillas, monkeys, lemurs and other primates are in danger of becoming extinct, and scientists said it's our fault that our closest living relatives are in trouble, a new international study warned. About 60 percent of the more than 500 primate species are "now threatened with extinction" and three out of four primate species have shrinking populations, according to a study published in Wednesday's journal Science Advances. While scientists had tracked dwindling numbers of individuals and groups of primates in forests around the world, this is the first big-picture look. The result was "a bigger wake-up call" than previously thought, said researcher Paul Garber of the University of Illinois. —AP



A ring-tailed lemur watches out of a window at the zoo in Duisburg, Germany. Primates are heading toward an extinction crisis, a new international study warned. —AP

Daily Tribune

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Chevron coastal clean-up allows turtles' nesting

Multiple Olive-Ridley sea turtles have begun to nest as a result of Caltex brand marketer Chevron Philippines Inc. (CPI)'s San Pascual coastal clean-up during the annual Week of Caring held every September.

With two sea turtle nest sightings along the San Pascual coastline to date, CPI has been ramping up efforts to ensure that nesting grounds stay protected at all costs.

Guards on duty have gently combed the surface sand over the nesting sites while taking extra care not to disturb the eggs, fenced the areas, and kept the sites safe from tidal waves.

CPI likewise continues to closely monitor two possible nesting sites near the causeway. It already enclosed the sites to prevent natural predators including monitor lizards or *bayawak*, stray cats and dogs, and even rodents from preying and eating the eggs.

Guards also vigilantly keep close watch on the possible nesting sites to maintain enclosure integrity.

CPI expects the turtle eggs to ripen and the hatchlings to mature and rise to the ground surface within two months.

Guards handling the nesting areas have all undergone Marine Sea Turtle 101 training by the Philippine Global Programme of Action with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office Protected Area and Wildlife Bureau.

The San Pascual nesting activity is the

A "talisay" tree marks the area where Olive-Ridley sea turtles have laid their eggs.

We are extremely elated with the success of our recent coastal clean-up, thanks to the continued support of the local community and CPI employees who have exhibited true volunteerism.

We are committed towards preserving the Batangas coastal area as a declared marine sanctuary for Olive-Ridley sea turtles, and we will constantly safeguard these eggs, through our strengthened protection efforts," Peter Morris, CPI country chairman, said.

About 200 CPI employees and over 100 town residents and students from San Pascual, Batangas joined the annual coastal clean-up, which removed a total of 514 garbage bags or 2.5 tons of worth of rubbish from the area.

The coastal clean-up is the final activity of this year's five-day WOC program, which included school facilities improvement, road safety education, and art therapy session.

This is the ninth edition of the WOC, which advocates volunteerism among CPI employees and business partners.

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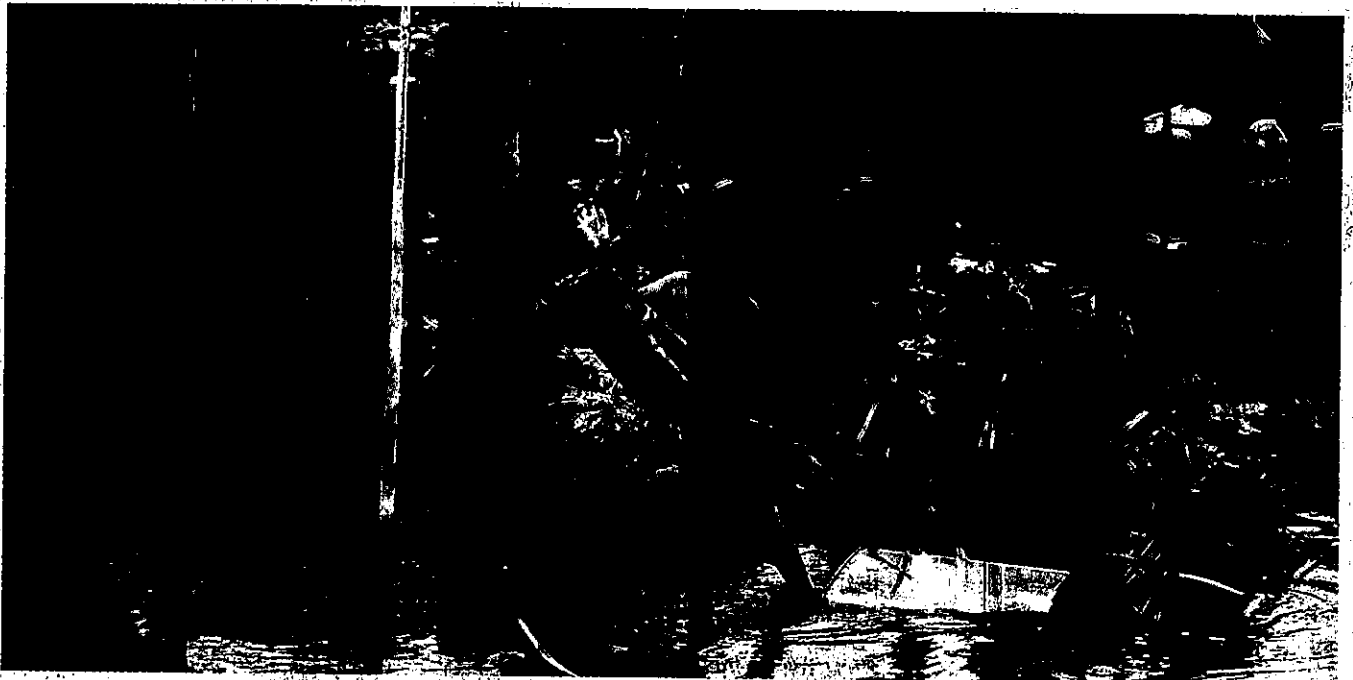
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MONEY FROM FLOOD DEBRIS – A resident of Barangay Paknaan in Mandaue City collects bull tree trunks that were carried downstream by floodwaters. The bull trunks will be fashioned into brooms. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Earth reached highest heat record in 2016

MARKING another milestone for a changing planet, scientists reported on Wednesday that the Earth reached its highest temperature on record in 2016—trouncing a record set only a year earlier, which beat one set in 2014.

It is the first time in the modern era of global warming data that temperatures have blown past the previous record three years in a row.

The findings come two days before the inauguration of a US president who has called global warming a Chinese plot and vowed to roll back his predecessor's efforts to cut emissions of heat-trapping gases.

In reality, the Earth is heating up, a point long beyond serious scientific dispute, but one becoming more evident as the records keep falling. Temperatures are heading toward levels that many experts believe will pose a profound threat to both the natural world and to human civilization.

In 2015 and 2016 the planetary warming was intensified by the weather pattern known as El Niño, in which the Pacific Ocean released a huge burst of energy and water vapor into the atmosphere. But the bigger factor in setting the records was the long-term trend of rising temperatures, which scientists say is being driven by increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

"A single warm year is something of a curiosity," said Deke Arndt, chief of global climate monitoring for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). "It's really the trend, and the fact that we're punching at the ceiling every year now, that is the real indicator that we're undergoing big changes."

The heat extremes were especially pervasive in the Arctic, with temperatures in the fall running 20 degrees Fahrenheit to 30° F above normal across large stretches of

the Arctic Ocean.

Sea ice in that region has been in precipitous decline for years, and Arctic communities are already wrestling with enormous problems, such as rapid coastal erosion, caused by the changing climate.

"What's going on in the Arctic is really very impressive; this year was ridiculously off the chart," said Gavin A. Schmidt, head of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in Manhattan, a unit of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) that tracks global temperatures. But Arctic people were hardly alone in feeling the heat. Drought and starvation afflicted Africa.

Last May 19 the people in the town of Phalodi lived through the hottest day in the recorded history of India, 123.8° F.

El Niño has now ended, and climate scientists almost universally expect 2017 to be cooler than the year before. But the scale

of the heat burst has been startling to many of the experts, and some of them fear an accelerated era of global warming could be at hand over the next few years.

Even at current temperatures, billions of tons of land ice are melting or sliding into the ocean. The sea is also absorbing most of the heat trapped by human emissions. Those factors are causing the ocean to rise at what appears to be an accelerating pace, and coastal communities in the United States are beginning to spend billions to fight increased tidal flooding. Their pleas for help from Congress have largely been ignored.

The finding that a record had been set for the third year in a row was released on Wednesday by three government agencies, two of them American and one British, that track measurements made by ships, buoys and land-based weather stations.