

**DATE**

23 JAN 2016

**DAY**

Monday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

# Conserve water until El Niño ends—Paje

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**S**AYING the strong El Niño episode is still being strongly felt in many parts of the country, Environment Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje on Sunday stressed the need to conserve water until the dry spell ends with the onset of the rainy season in June or July.

Paje earlier told reporters he will ask the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), to conduct an assessment of available water resources, particularly in the Angat Dam, to determine water allocation for domestic use, irrigation and power generation.

"We want to study how much water do we have to plan ahead, how to use our water," Paje said, who sits as chairman of the NWRB.

In a statement, he appealed to water consumers, particularly in

Metro Manila, to help conserve water. "We do not want to deplete our water supply before the El Niño eases up," he said.

He issued the appeal following reports of water shortages, particularly in agricultural areas.

These shortages have led to water rationing, cloud seeding and declaration of state of calamity in some areas in Mindanao, the DENR chief noted. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said the country is likely to continue experiencing the worst

# 150

Million liters per day that Maynilad is extracting from Laguna de Bay to augment water supply for Alabang and Cavite

of El Niño until February, with droughts expected to hit most of the countryside until April.

Experts from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, however, have observed a "weakening" El Niño, and they expect the dry spell to be over by midyear.

Until then, Paje said the public should conserve water to make sure that the current water supply will suffice. "We need to think about how our actions affect everyone's food supply and electricity," he said.



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# BusinessMirror

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A broader look at today's business

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

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Director Ricardo Calderon of the DENR's Forest Management Bureau (FMB) said the country's forest-protection officers are on alert for potential forest fires because of the El Niño.

He also said the DENR's partners in the implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP) have been advised to watch out for forest fires.

### Laguna de Bay water

WATER supply for the domestic use of Metro Manila's over 12 million population comes from the Angat Dam and La Mesa Dam. The Angat Dam is the biggest dam in the country, but it is also being used for power generation and agriculture, apart from supplying the daily water requirements of Metro Manila.

The private water contractors of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) are eyeing other potential sources of water for their expanding service areas and increasing number of customers. The Laguna de Bay, the country's largest freshwater lake, is a potential source of water, even though its current water

quality is classified as "Class C," which means it is good for fisheries production.

Officials of Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) said the updated master plan for the Laguna de Bay is geared toward maintaining the current status of the lake's water quality for fisheries production, but said the new technologies to purify water makes it possible for domestic use.

In fact, Maynilad, whose water supply comes from Angat Dam, has been extracting water of about 150 million liters per day (MLD) from the Laguna de Bay since 2010 to augment water supply for Alabang and Cavite service areas. Maynilad holds the water concession for the West Zone of Metro Manila.

The company maintains a water-treatment facility in Barangay Putatan, Muntinlupa City, where it purifies water for distribution to its customers in Alabang and Cavite area. The company is allowed to extract 300 MLD from the Laguna de Bay, but it only extracts 120 MLD to 150 MLD, depending on the water requirements.

Starting next year, Manila Water, whose water supply mostly

comes from La Mesa Dam, which holds the concession for the East Zone of Metro Manila, will extract water in Morong, Bataan, said Cesar R. Quintos, the head of LLDA's Policy Planning and Information Management Division.

He said the LLDA and Manila Water have already signed an agreement last year, formalizing the plan. The agreement allows Manila Water to extract 100 MLD, which it intends to use to augment water supply for its concession area in Rizal.

"Our plan is to maintain the quality of water in Laguna de Bay for fisheries production and other possible uses," Quintos said.

According to the state environment agency, El Niño is the climate interaction between the Pacific Ocean and the atmosphere and is linked to the warming of sea surface temperatures across the equatorial Pacific. The phenomenon influences weather patterns, ocean conditions and fisheries across the world over an extended period of time. El Niño has a cycle span of two to seven years. The Philippines last experienced it between mid-2009 and mid-2010.



# Conserve-water plea amid El Niño's threat

**By Anna Leah E. Gonzales**

*ENVIRONMENT Secretary Ramon Paje on Sunday appealed to the public to conserve water as the El Niño continues to intensify, threatening water supply in many parts of the country.*

"Those of us enjoying enough water supply now should be more conscious about our usage, so that we do not put undue pressure on our water sources," Paje said.

"We do not want to deplete our water supply before El Niño eases up," he said.

Paje made the appeal as water shortage hit several agricultural areas.

The shortage has led to

water rationing, cloud seeding and declaration of state of calamity in some areas in Mindanao.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said the country is likely to continue experiencing the worst of El Niño until February with drought expected to hit most of the countryside until April.

Experts from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, however, have observed a "weakening" El Niño and are expecting the dry spell to be over by midyear.

But until then, Paje urged the people to think about sectors suffering the brunt of El Niño such as agriculture, fisheries, energy and the environment the next time they let faucets run continuously when washing their hands, shaving, and brushing their teeth.

"We need to think about how our actions affect everyone's food supply and electricity," he said.

He expressed concern about the setback that El Niño could bring to the government's massive reforestation program, as foliage dry up and become prone

to forest fires.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other government agencies have already issued separate advisories and tips on how to conserve water in anticipation of the dry spell.

El Niño is the climatic interaction between the Pacific Ocean and the atmosphere and is linked to the warming of sea surface temperatures across the equatorial Pacific.

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El Niño has a cycle span of two to seven years. The Philippines last experienced it between mid-2009 and mid-2010.



# The Manila Times

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## DENR TO PUBLIC: BRACE FOR EL NIÑO, CONSERVE WATER

WITH the El Niño phenomenon expected to intensify in the coming months, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has reiterated its appeal for the public to help in water conservation efforts even as supply remained relatively stable for now.

"Those of us enjoying enough water supply now should be more conscious about our usage, so that we do not put undue pressure on our water sources," Environment

Secretary Ramon Paje said over the weekend.

"We do not want to deplete our water supply before El Niño eases up," Paje added, noting that several parts of the country continue to experience water shortage despite localized rainfalls.

The DENR chief made the appeal over reports of water shortage, particularly in agricultural areas.

The shortage has led to water rationing, cloud seeding and decla-

ration of state of calamity in some areas in Mindanao.

Weather bureau Pagasa earlier said the country is likely to continue experiencing the worst of El Niño until February, with droughts expected to hit most of the countryside until April.

Experts from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, however, have observed a "weakening" El Niño and are expecting the dry spell to be over

by mid-year.

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**JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ**



THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1898

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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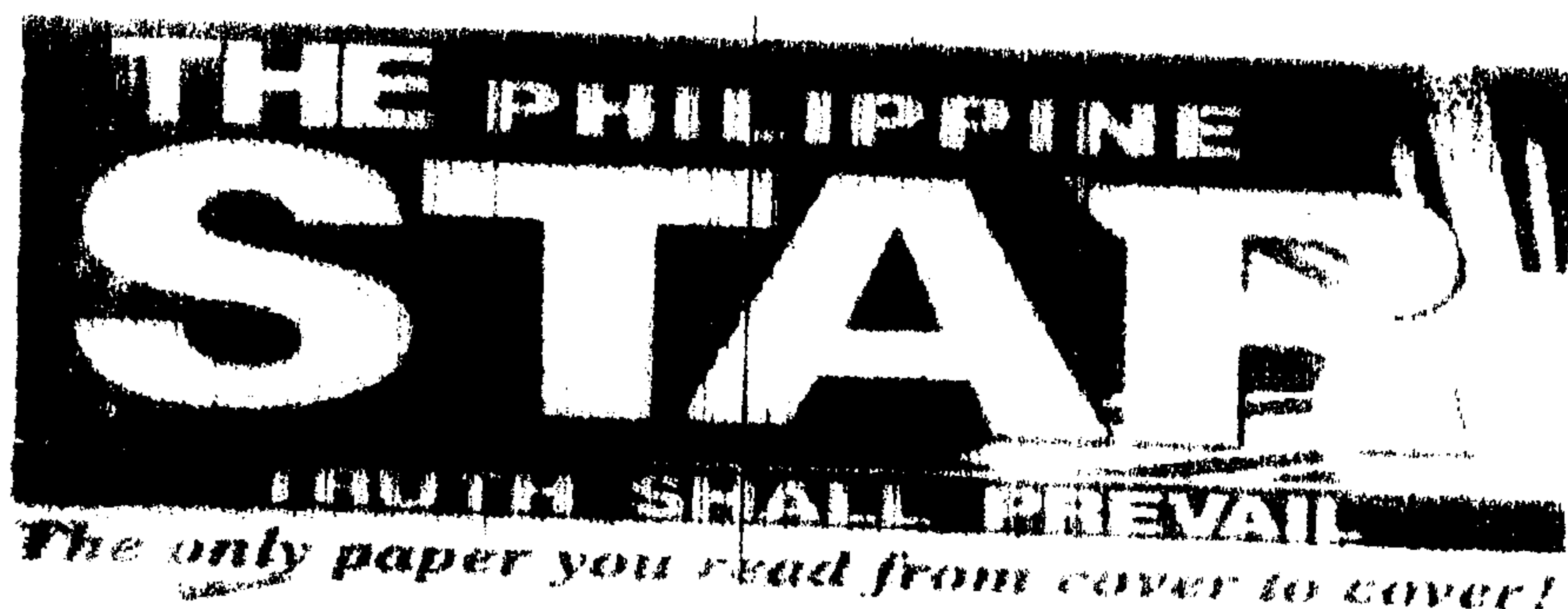
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

## • Save water now, public urged

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has again appealed to the public to conserve water as the El Niño dry spell continues to intensify, triggering water shortage in various parts of the country. Environment Secretary Ramon J. Paje in a statement made the call following reports of water shortage due to the phenomenon, particularly in the agricultural areas of the country. He said the threat already has led to water rationing, cloud seeding and declaration of state of calamity in some areas in Mindanao. "Those of use enjoying enough water supply now should be more conscious about our usage, so that we do not put undue pressure on our water sources," Paje said. "We do not want to deplete our water supply before El Niño eases up." He also expressed his concern about threats in forest fires amid the government's massive reforestation program, as foliage dry up and become easily prone to fire. (Vanne Elaine P. Terrazola)



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# DENR, transport sector work to

# improve air quality in Phl

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has partnered with the transport sector to improve air quality in Metro Manila.

The agency and transport leaders signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the conduct of free emission testing of public utility jeepneys (PUJs) at their respective garages and

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

terminals.

"The purpose is not to apprehend public utility vehicles, but to help our transport groups address their emissions and ensure that their vehicles comply with the law before they drive around major thoroughfares," Environment

Assistant Secretary Juan Miguel Cuna said.

The transport groups that signed the MOA were Liga ng Transportasyon at Operators sa Pilipinas (LTOP), Alliance of Concerned Transport Organizations (ACTO), Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (FEDJODAP), and Pangkalahatang Sanggunian Manila and Suburbs Drivers Association Nationwide (PASANG-MASDA).

Under the agreement, transport groups are to submit their PUJs for voluntary testing jointly conducted by the DENR, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), and Land Transportation Office (LTO).

Cuna said the results of garage emission testing will be used to assess the current emission compliance of PUJs in the National Capital Region.

Furthermore, DENR will provide technical assistance to LTFRB and LTO

on the possible establishment of their own anti-smoke belching operations (ASBO).

Conducting ASBO along the roadside and terminal emission testing nationwide are government initiatives to ensure that vehicles comply with the in-use emission standards set by Administrative Order No. 2000-81 or the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Philippine Clean Air Act.

"Strengthening the enforcement of air quality management as stipulated in the Clean Air Act is more crucial now more than ever and we need the full cooperation of the LTO and the LTFRB, as well as the transport sector," Cuna said.

DENR said 80 percent of air pollution comes from motor vehicles, while 20 percent comes from stationary sources, including factory smoke stacks and open burning.

Air pollution coming from vehicular emissions is believed to be the major cause of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and a major contributor to global warming and climate change.



# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### A scientist's take on SC's decision on Bt 'talong'

I READ the Supreme Court decision on Bt *talong* with much interest. Central to the issue is an understanding of scientific consensus and the "precautionary principle" in adjudicating legal questions.

A scientific consensus is a collective opinion of scientists, based on fact as established by the scientific method. This does not imply that there is no disagreement, only that the disagreement is insignificant and will likely not affect the validity of the scientific conclusion.

The crux of the Supreme Court's decision lies in applying the precautionary principle by appealing to scientific consensus. This principle and its parameters, which are in every freshman textbook on environmental science, were well qualified by the Court. However, the ethical application of the principle lies in the proper

understanding of the uncertainty of scientific theories, and there cannot be a foregone conclusion that scientific consensus will not be

achieved. Here it is very disadvantageous for science and Filipino society to cherry-pick scientific facts to support certain ideological positions.

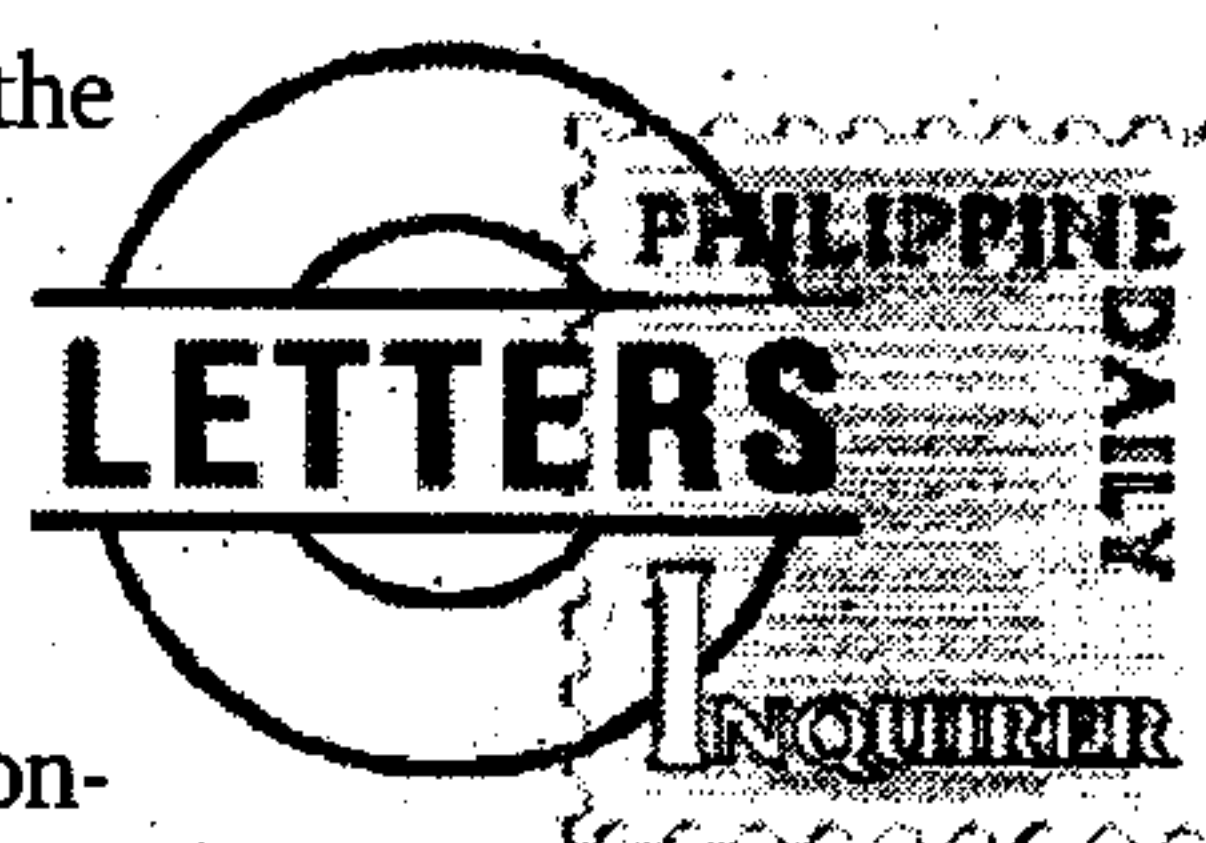
Scientists are often conservative in interpreting their conclusions. This conservatism has been construed as a no-consensus on GMO safety. However, from further reading of the arguments on which the Court based its decision, it is apparent that the Court has taken an ideological line in considering the scientific facts. For there is scientific consensus on the safety of GMOs. On the other hand, there is very little evidence to conclude that GMO consumption is harmful to humans as based on the meta-analysis of more than 20 years of factual research. Thus the likelihood is that the conclusion is erroneous is small.

The precautionary principle requires not just uncertainty but "substantial uncertainty" estimated by statistical methods, so that scientific applications with human safety concerns can be reasonably assured. The risks must be weighed against the rewards by using scientific methods. This criteria of reducing uncertainty is why some scientific conclusions on the harmfulness of GMOs have been reasonably rejected by the scientific community.

Most scientists recognize that there is good reason to maintain moderate skepticism regarding the claims and distrust of large biotechnology firms because of their obvious profit motives. This is part of the reasonable application of the precautionary principle. This, however, does not mean acceptance of the naturalistic fallacy that everything natural and untampered by human technology is necessarily "good."

Scientists recognize the shortcomings of our science policy on regulation and the Court has rightly noted this. There is a need to strengthen regulations and ensure accountability among parties. However, while science policy is multi-dimensional involving political, social, moral and economic dimensions, among others, it should ultimately be based on scientific theory. And when there are gray areas in the applications of technology, scientific research should continue in order to further determine the risks.

—BENJAMIN M. VALLEJO JR.,  
associate professor of environmental science,  
and head, Science and Society Program,  
College of Science,  
University of the Philippines Diliman





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Environment group told: Buy land, save birds

By **Tonette Orejas**  
*Inquirer Central Luzon*

CANDABA, Pampanga—Buy the land to preserve migratory birds and their habitat.

The Philippine Wilderness Land Trust (PWLT) and the Manuel V. Pangilinan-led Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) are taking this innovative step to preserve the last sanctuary of local and migratory birds in the 35,000-hectare Candaba Swamp.

PWLT and MPTC officials visited Sitio Doña Simang in Barangay Vizal San Pablo here on Saturday to inspect a 70-hectare lot where globe-trotting birds as well as domestic fowls have been landing for the last 20 years to escape the Siberian winter and local cold fronts.

They were accompanied by bird watchers and bikers, who have advocated for the protection of this valuable bird habitat.

Candaba Swamp is one of five wetlands in Central Luzon. The others are the Paitan Lake in Cuyapo and Pantabangan Dam, both in Nueva Ecija; Puerto Rivas in Balanga City; and Consuelo in Macabebe, also in Pampanga.

The property which PWLT and MPTC inspected belongs to Jerry Pelayo, a former mayor of Candaba.

He bought the land from a bank in the 1990s, but Pelayo did not disturb a large pond there when he realized it had been frequented by six or seven *dumara* (Philippine wild ducks).

"In my childhood, *dumara* darkened the skies when they flew. They were too many back then," he informed his guests.

### Bird sanctuary

In the last eight years, birds of all kinds and sizes came by the thousands to three other ponds inside Pelayo's property, some even nesting in the area.

But sustaining a bird sanctuary was difficult, said Pelayo. "I did not get any centavo from the government. I did not collect any fee from visitors either," he said.

Pelayo said he spent a P1-million grant from the German government to construct a viewing deck and the fences surrounding the ponds.

To pay for the medical expenses of his wife, Pelayo grew rice on a portion of his property, preserving 28 hectares for the birds. This did not please bird watchers, however.

"They forget this is my land. I need to balance the needs of my family and the birds," Pelayo said, prompting him to seek the support of environmentalists like PWLT president Ivan Sarenas.

Sarenas said, "We plan to acquire and preserve [Pelayo's property] as a wilderness forever.. We can't just complain to the government or wage campaigns on Facebook. Ownership of the habitat is a way of protecting it and the birds."

Sarenas described this part of the Candaba Swamp as an internationally important wetland.

### Funding conservation

"We are amenable to being part of a group that will fund conservation," said Rodrigo Franco, MPTC president and chief executive officer, although he said the price of the purchase has not yet been discussed.

"We need to craft a business model for the place," Franco said. "One thing we can assure [conservationists] is that [the MPTC and Manila North Tollways Corp.] are willing to be the cornerstones of the group."

In January 2013, 5,475 waterfowls of 31 resident and globe-trotting species were recorded in two sites here for the Asian Waterbird Census by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP).

The 2013 figure was less than the 12,600 birds tallied in 2012, and the 8,600 birds counted in 2011, according to

records.

Alain Pascua photographed a dusky warbler at the Doña Simang site in Barangay Vizal San Pablo. Mike Lu, president of WBCP, said this was the second sighting of this species in the Philippines.

The common shelduck was first seen in Candaba this season, Lu said.

The 2013 census identified 14 migratory species including little egrets, intermediate egrets, great egrets, gray heron, common teal, northern shoveler, tufted duck, common kingfishers, common sandpiper, wood sandpiper, northern pintail, garganey, whiskered tern and the eagle-like eastern marsh harrier.



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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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LOCAL and migratory birds take refuge from cold and winter in water-fed farms and flood basins in Candaba town in Pampanga province from October. They have been losing their habitats as people turn these areas into rice land and fishponds.

E. I. REYMON



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# The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### 'Overcrowded jailhouse causes pollution in Lingayen Gulf'

DAGUPAN CITY—An overcrowded Bureau of Jail Management and Penology facility in Barangay Bonuan Gueset here has been tagged as the main culprit behind the environmental pollution in the Lingayen Gulf.

This was the result of an inspection conducted by Edward Vergara, senior environmental specialist of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office at said facility in November last year.

Vergara said the facility has a capacity of only 250 persons but is housing 800 inmates.

"Due to overcrowding of the facility, to include the inmates, visitors, employees of BJMP, the facility's septic tank is no longer capable of holding the waste and waste water of the entire facility," said Vergara.

The BJMP facility is located 100 meters away from the shoreline of the Bonuan Tondaligan Beach.

The tourists and residents are complaining about air and water pollution coming from the BJMP facility.

Vergara said similar complaint has been addressed in 2008 by expanding the septic tank "but right now it cannot be done anymore."

"BJMP authorities attested that the septic tank was already expanded to its maximum width and length virtually covering the whole area of the facility," Vergara said.

To solve the problem, Vergara said they recommended regular siphoning and planting trees around the area to the BJMP.

"We will monitor BJMP's compliance or else we will be forced to ask the facility to secure a wastes water permit," said Vergara.

"BJMP said they have no budget to bankroll the regular siphoning of wastes from their septic tanks but maybe we can ask financial help from the local government," he added.

PNA



# BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### DA conducts cloud-seeding operations in Soccsksargen

BY MANUEL T. CAYON  
Mindanao Bureau Chief

**T**HE Department of Agriculture (DA) has started cloud-seeding operations in Soccsksargen, the country's second-largest rice-producing region, to mitigate the adverse impact of El Niño on rice crops.

Cloud seeding was conducted on Saturday over Sarangani and South Cotabato upon the recommendation of the Bureau of Soils and Water Management.

Soil experts joined Philippine Air Force pilots to plot and determine the most appropriate cloud formation and density.

Director Amalia Jayag-Datukan of the regional DA office said the team conducted its assessment last week in General Santos City before it finalized the operation over the weekend.

The assessment was also attended by the DA's Regional Agricultural Engineering Section and personnel from the four provincial governments in the Soccsksargen.

The participants in the orientation served as cloud spotters, who were briefed on identifying the wind speed, direction and the types of the clouds.

Datukan said cloud-seeding sorties would continue across different parts of the region, composed of South Cotabato, North Cotabato,

Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City.

Soccsksargen is currently experiencing the severe effect of El Niño on the region's farm sector, including rat infestation, which usually occurs during a prolonged dry spell.

Cloud seeding is a process of manually spreading salt or dry ice on dense cloud formation to trigger condensation and induce rain.

The regional office of the DA has listed cloud seeding as one of the mitigating measures to cushion the ill effects of El Niño.

Some 900 25-kilogram bags of salt were used for the operation. Each flight, which costs around P45,000, spreads 10 to 11 bags of salt on clouds.

Datukan said the best time for cloud seeding is between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

She also encouraged public participation by informing her office of "seedable" clouds.

"They may take photographs of these cloud buildup and post them at Agri Tayo Soccsksargen Facebook page," Datukan said.

In December last year Datukan said the regional DA office has allocated P44 million for various interventions, such as the distribution of seeds and other relief assistance, to help farmers jump-start planting activities and recover losses from the dry spell.



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**PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS**

## New IRRI research complex to test climate change impact on rice output

BY PAUL M. ICAMINA

A STATE-OF-THE-ART research complex on biotechnology and genetic diversity opened recently at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

Located adjacent to the University of the Philippines Los Banos, the Lloyd T. Evans Plant Growth Facility (PGF) is designed to provide scientists worldwide with the tools, resources and venue for biotechnology research and the conservation of genetic diversity, IRRI said.

Researchers can precisely control temperature, relative humidity, light intensity, photoperiod systems, atmospheric gases and water management systems in eight controlled-environment glasshouses. While scientists can nurture and study plants, particularly rice, in a wide range of environments, the glasshouses will be used for research on strategic plant physiology that will provide data and information to improve the performance of other crops such as wheat.

The innovative research that will be carried out will contribute significantly to understanding the impact of climate change on the growth of the rice plant, IRRI said. Climate change is a concern that cuts across the various areas of IRRI's research agenda. Its implications on rice production is better understood through research on physiological processes and interactions in the rice plant when subject to changing temperatures, humidity, amount of sunshine and atmospheric gases. The knowledge will help scientists develop even sturdier climate-ready rice varieties and improved farming practices.

IRRI said it aims to attract young and new graduates to the facility's cutting-edge array of scientific equipment and to make a career out of studying the crop sciences.

The research complex includes large controlled-environment walk-in and reach-in plant growth chambers as well as a plant processing and potting laboratories and a large seed processing and storage setup. It uses environment-friendly systems using rainwater capture and storage, natural ventilation and energy-saving technologies.

The \$ 10-million research complex was funded by the Australian Center for International Agricultural Research, a major partner of IRRI.

The PGF is named after Dr. Lloyd T. Evans (1927-2015), a plant physiologist well-known for his book, "Feeding the Ten Billion" published in 1998 on the 200th anniversary of Thomas Malthus's seminal "Essay on the Principle of Population" and its gloomy projection of runaway population growth and scarce food supply.

The book describes 10,000 years of farming innovation and how the evolution of agriculture has shaped and been shaped by world population growth. It provides insights into the present and future of food security.



# Business World

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

# WHY COAL AND RENEWABLES COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER

In many literatures on energy and environment, electricity and climate policies, the dominant view is that fossil fuels in general, and coal power in particular, are the “enemies” of sustainable development. This should not be the case. The truth is that coal power plays a complementary and not contradictory role to development. Three sets of data will show why.

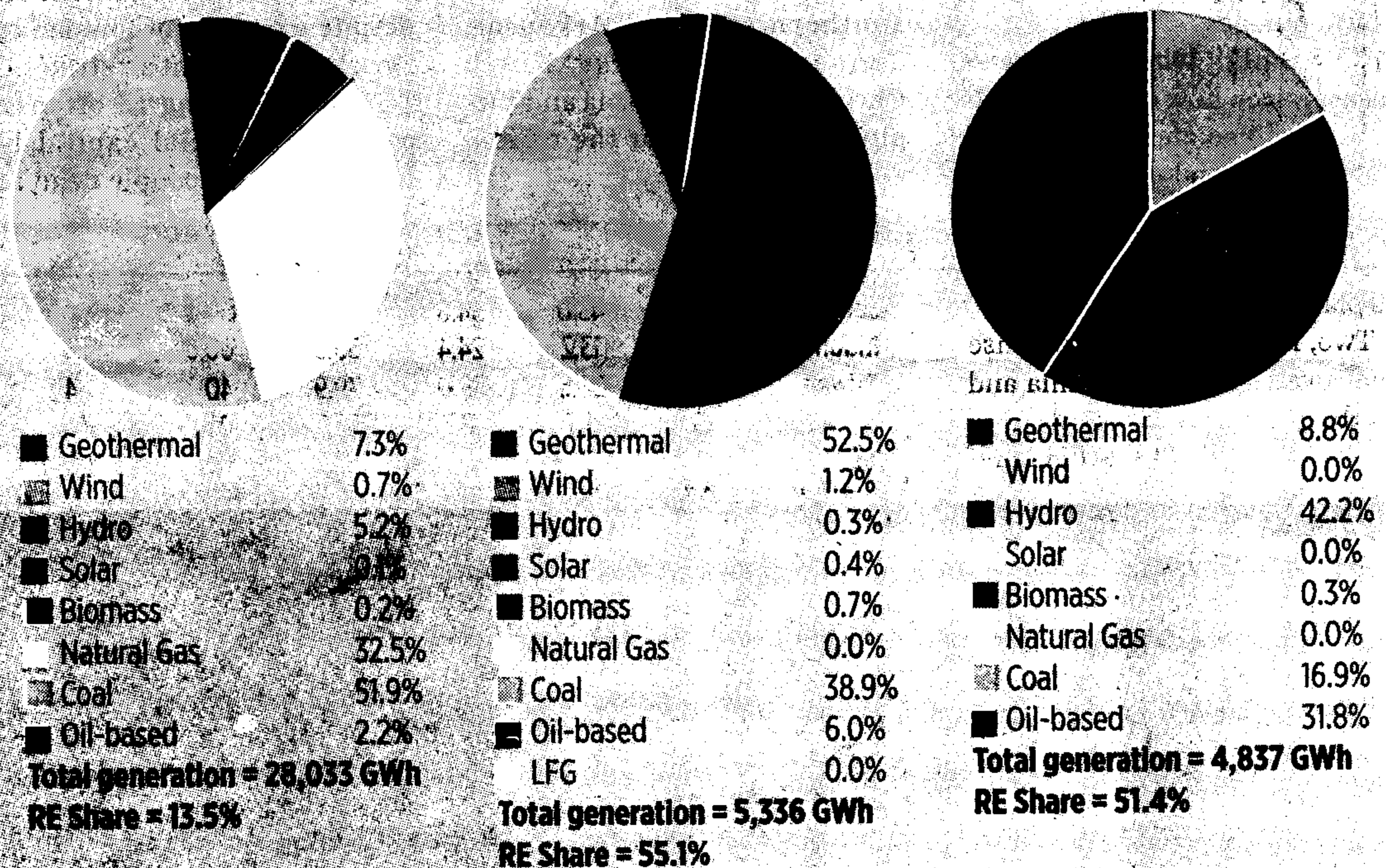
One, without coal and natural gas, the Philippines will be as dark at night as North Korea and other underdeveloped countries experiencing daily “Earth hours.”

In Luzon grid, coal + natural gas + oil have produced 86.6% of total power generation in the first half of 2015. The “old renewables” hydro and geothermal contributed 12.5% while the “new renewables” wind, solar and biomass contributed only 1.0%, very small.

In the Visayas grid, coal and geothermal provide the bulk of power generation and in Mindanao, it is hydro, oil, and coal. (See chart)

Note that the actual power generation of coal + natural gas of 84.4% are much larger than

PH POWER GENERATION MIX, AVERAGE FOR JAN.-JUNE 2015



SOURCE: DOE SEC. ZENAIDA MONSADA, “ENERGY PROSPECTS FOR THE PHILIPPINES”, PRESENTED AT EPDP CONFERENCE, JANUARY 12-13, 2016, NEW WORLD HOTEL, MAKATI CITY.

their power capacity of 61.2% of total dependable capacity in the Luzon grid. This means that power plants that use these two

fuel types are producing more electricity at stable supply and cheaper prices than other power plants that use oil and geothermal

(stable supply but expensive), hydro (low supply during dry months) and new renewable (unstable supply and expensive).