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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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DENR vows to prosecute poachers, wildlife traffickers

By Joel dela Torre

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu has warned that there will be no letup in the crackdown on poachers and wildlife traffickers as he hailed the interception of over 700 live venomous tarantulas at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport earlier this week.

According to Cimatu, the government will never get tired of rescuing wildlife and put their tormentors to jail to teach them a lesson that wildlife species are not commodities for trade.

The DENR chief commended the Bureau of Customs for the discovery of at least 757 tarantulas flown into the country from Poland describing it as another victory in the fight against illegal wildlife trade.

"The BoC agents and personnel who discovered the shipment should give themselves a pat on their backs for stopping the illegal trade of these wildlife species," Cimatu said.

The tarantulas, with an estimated value of P310,000, were concealed in gift-wrapped boxes for oatmeal, cookies and tea shipped from Poland.

This also resulted in the arrest of two suspects, one of them was the consignee of the shipment.

The suspects and the tarantula shipment were turned over to the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade or Task Force POGI, which is composed of wildlife enforcers from various agencies, including the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police.

BMB senior ecosystems management specialist Rogelio Demellentes Jr. said the two suspects, who

claimed the shipment at NAIA's Central Mail Exchange Center, have already been charged with violation of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources and Protection Act.

Under the law, illegal trading, possession, and transport of wildlife spe-

cies are punishable by a jail term of up to two years and a fine of not more than P200,000.

Cimatu said the next step is for the government to coordinate with the Polish government for the possible return of the tarantula shipment to its country of origin.



REAKSYON SA PAGLILINIS NI PRRD SA BANSÁ

NAKATUTUWA dahil magkasunod nating isinulat ang sipag ng mga tauhan ni Pangulong RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE, partikular ang DENR, DILG, DOT, DOTr, DPWH at itong huli ay ang pagsama ng mga lokal na pamahalaan sa paglilinis ng kani-kanilang teritoryo.

Una na nga ang Boracay at El Nido pati ang mga kalapit na pasyalan – beaches sa Palawan at Visayas. Mas nabigla pa ang lahat nang ipag-utos din ni Mayor DIGONG na ibalik sa ganda ang Manila Bay na alam natin lahat hindi biro kung ilang lalawigan, bayan at lungsod ang sakop nito.

Mula sa Region 3, National Capital Region, Calabarzon at Mimaropa. Hindi pa nga natin alam kung pagdating ng tag-ulan ay dadalhin muli ng alon ang mga basura sa Manila Bay. Ano kaya sa palagay ni DENR USEC. BENNY ANTIPORDA na may tungkulin sa kalinisan ng basurahan?

Para sa atin, kayang-kaya basta sama-sama. Ganyan ang ginagawa ng DENR at ni Usec. Benny na walang pinipiling araw sa pagtiyak na ang lahat ay lumalahok para sa ikagaganda ng buong bansa. Kayo? Sama?

Katulad ng pagbaha sa Cagayan De Oro...

Sinisimulan na ang pagsasagawa ng dalawang road drainage systems sa Cagayan de Oro upang maibsan ang paulit-ulit na problema sa pagbaha sa lungsod. Pagsunod ito sa hangad ni Pang DIGONG!

Ang mga barangay ng Camaman-an at Lapasan ay kabilang sa mga target na lugar ng Department of Public Works and Highways sa Region 10 para sa kanilang proyektong maibsan

ang pagbaha. May kabuuang budget na PHP1.84 bilyon ang inilaan para sa bahaging ito ng proyekto.

Umaabot sa 1.23 kilometro ang diversion line project sa Brgy. Camaman-an kabilang ang pinatibay na concrete box culvert na umaabot mula sa Bitan-ag Creek salungat patungong Kolambog Creek na siyang lalabasan ng tubig.

Kasama rin ang Kolambog Creek sa channel improvement project ng DPWH-10 sapagkat dumadaloy ang tubig sa sapa mula Brgy. Camaman-an patungong Butuan-Cagayan de Oro-Illigan Road at Macajalar Bay at dadaloy palabas sa Brgy. Lapasan. Ang proyekto ay kinabibilangan ng pagsasagawa ng isang open canal, 16 metrong flat slab bridge, at 894 metrong pinatibay na concrete borin ang DPWH-10 sa Brgy. Sapang at Carmen na inaasahang matapos sa taong 2022.

Binigyang diin din ni Cagayan De Oro Mayor Oscar Moreno ang kahalagahan ng pagsasaayos ng drainage system para maiwasan ang malawakang pagbaha, lalo na tuwing tag-ulan. Pinasinayaan din ni Mayor Moreno and mga programa na may layuning pagtibayin ang disaster preparedness and response ng lungsod.

Kayo, tayo? Maghihintay pa ba na tawagan ng pansin? Let's go tungo sa tunay na pagbabago!



WORLD WATER DAY "HAWAK-KAMAY, TUBIG KAAGAPAY"

AYON kay Executive Director Seville David, Jr. ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), mas marami ang nabigyan ng award ngayong taon na nagmula sa iba't ibang institusyon ang mga ipinami-gay na award.

Ang Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) ng DENR ay napili ang apat na "Kampeon ng Lawa" ngayong taon. Ito ay ang Biñan City Centralized Material Recovery, Waste Processing and Transfer Station ng Laguna; YES to Green Program ni Rizal Governor Rebecca Ynares; Sta. Rosa Sub-Watershed Management Council at ang Alberto Malvar ng Mount Purro Nature Reserve Park sa Antipolo City.

Kinilala naman bilang "Planet-Wise Organization" ang Camarines Norte District Engineering Office ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) dahil sa mga environmental projects nito sa mga komunidad na kanilang nasasakupan. Inisponsoran ang award ng NWRB, DPWH at Maynilad.

Ang "Kavontog Do't Aweg" ay ipinagkaloob ng Aboitiz Infra capital sa Davao City Watershed Management Council. Ang pangalan ng award na ito ay nagmula sa salitang Manobo na ang ibig sabihin ay "Hero of the Water".

Ipinagkaloob naman ng Maynilad ang Water Warrior Awards ngayong taon sa Philippine Science High School



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

Main Campus sa Quezon City para sa Water Education category, habang ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission Executive Director Jose Antonio Goitia ay kinilala para sa katagoryang Advocacy Leadership.

Apat na water districts naman ang nakatanggap ng "Humarang Lingkod Tubig" awards na inisponsoran ng Local Water Utilities Administration. Ito ay ang mga water districts ng Baguio City, Metro Naga, Silay City at Isabela City.

Ang Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System ay nag-isponsor ng tatlong award ngayong taon. Ang

mga nakatanggap nito ay ang General Nakar Sustainable Integrated Area Development Project para sa Kaagapay sa Tubig Kanlungan ng Umiray; Ipo Watershed Bantay Gubat para sa Kaagapay sa Tubig Kanlungan ng Ipo at ang Save La Mesa Watershed Project para sa Kaagapay sa Tubig Kanlungan ng La Mesa award.

Noong 2015 nang simulan ang World Water Day Awards. Kinikilala nito ang mga leader ng indigenous peoples, community workers, media personalities, local governments, academe-based organizations at iba pang institusyon at organisasyon.

CHINESE-MANNED VESSEL MOVES TO BATANGAS PORT

LOBO MAYOR CHECKS FOR UNDERWATER DAMAGE AFTER DREDGING SHIP SAILS AWAY

By Maricar Cinco
@maricarcincoINQ

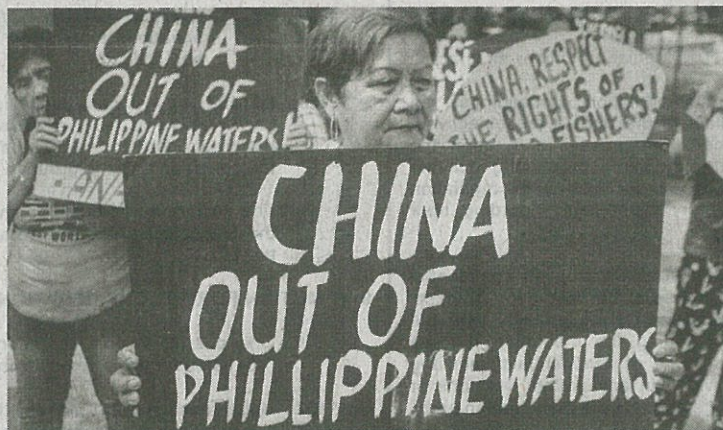
The mayor of Lobo town in Batangas province on Friday asked fishery authorities to inspect the site where a 2,990-ton Chinese-manned dredging ship had dropped anchor to determine whether it had caused damage to marine life.

The MV Emerald, whose arrival on March 28 had alarmed residents of the fishing village of Lagadlarin, lifted anchor early on Friday and moved to the waters off the international port of Batangas in Batangas City, according to Commodore Artemio Abu, the Philippine Coast Guard's Southern Tagalog district commander.

Mangrove forest

Mayor Gaudioso "Jurly" Manalo said he asked the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to check for possible damage on the coral reef and seagrass at the anchorage site, about 500 meters off Lagadlarin's shores.

Lagadlarin is home to Lobo's 30-hectare mangrove forest, a rich marine reserve where fish and sea turtles breed. Lobo's waters are part of the Verde Island Passage marine sanctuary, the world's cen-



ANTIDREDGING, ANTI-CHINA The opposition to a plan to dredge sand from Lobo River in Batangas province for use in the expansion of the Hong Kong international airport on Friday in Lobo town also was a protest against Chinese incursions in Philippine-claimed maritime territories and China's moves to drive away Filipino fishermen from their traditional fishing grounds in the West Philippine Sea. —JAM STA. ROSA

ter of the center of marine shorefish biodiversity.

Manalo said the local government would seek compensation for any environmental damage.

Abu told the Inquirer in a phone interview that Coast Guard divers found "no violations" during an inspection on Thursday.

"They're saying there could be corals [that could have been damaged]. There are no corals there," he added.

He said the divers found

sand but no seagrass or corals on the seafloor.

The ship, a hopper dredger, was chartered by Seagate Engineering and Buildsystems to remove 2 million cubic meters of sand from a 6.5-kilometer section of Lobo River under a 2008 memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the municipal government. The flood control project would be at no cost to the local government.

Seagate was supposed to

sell the sand for \$2 per metric ton to Hong Kong-based Synergy Group Holdings Ltd. for the expansion of the Hong Kong international airport.

Stalled project

The project, however, stalled because Seagate lacked the required government permits, including one for dredging from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and another for exporting mineral ore from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

That was the reason the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday suspended the three environmental compliance certificates (ECCs) it issued to Seagate in May and June 2018 for the desilting of the river's mouth, foreshore and estuary.

Manalo said the MOA had been superseded by a 10-year contract in 2012 between the local government and another company, FS Suntan Sand Corp., which had already started dredging and desilting the river.

He also said the dredging system to be used by Seagate could lead to the collapse of the river dikes being built by the DPWH.

Mafriel Dimaano, Lagadlarin village chief, said his con-

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(P.2) Lobo mayor checks for underwater damage after dredging ship
sails away

stituents, most of them fishermen, were "stressed" by the 19-m by 17-m ship's unannounced arrival and its looming presence in their waters.

"Thank you for your prayer[s] and care to our marine sanctuary," said Fr. Dakila Ramos of the Lipa Archdiocese Ministry on the Environment in a Facebook message after the ship departed from Lobo.

NSC permit needed

It was unclear how long the ship would stay in the Philippines. Seagate CEO and general manager Leo Campos said he would appeal the suspension of the ECCs and submit other requirements.

He was also awaiting a permit from the National Security Council (NSC), which gives the clearance for the operation of any foreign ship in Philippine waters.

In Manila, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said Seagate was set to face a "technical conference investigation." If the company is found to have committed any violation, it will likely be slapped a "steep fine," he added.

"They will be penalized, and it will be a big fine," he said.

—WITH A REPORT FROM PATRICIA
DENISE M. CHIU INQ



Trusted Since 1938

The Manila Times

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Multi-sector group campaigns vs Manila Bay reclamation

OVER 150 fisherfolk, environmentalists and students gathered on Thursday at the University of the Philippines (UP) Center for Integrative and Development Studies (CIDS) to gather support for the campaign against the Manila Bay Reclamation Project.

Speakers from various sectors such as the Commission on Human Rights, fisherfolk coalition Pangisda Pilipinas and environmental organization Oceana Philippines shed light on the impact of the looming reclamation project that could displace over 200,000 fisher families.

"The Manila Bay is a rich resource that feeds over 9 million people," said Eduardo Tadem, CIDS convener, in his keynote address.

He added that if it pushes through, the Manila Bay Reclamation Project would be the most destructive project in the country as it was considered an "irreversible form of environmental degradation."

"When you convert sea into land, you can never return it to its original condition," echoed lawyer Roger Guzman from Oceana Philippines.

Guzman stressed that the reclamation project would not only kill corals, seagrasses and mangroves, as it would also cause deforestation from inland quarrying activities and affect the overall ecological processes in the area.

He added that there would be geological hazards, including increased vulnerability to earthquakes, greater floods, storm surges, rising of sea level and land subsidence.

"These locations where they are most likely planning to construct their business are hazardous areas at risk of liquefaction," warned Guzman.

Tadem remarked that the reclamation project was said to be lacking proper stakeholders' consultation and transparency, and ignoring the many scientific accounts demonstrating its adverse effects.

An attack on the 'poorest' sector

Pangisda, an organization advocating for the interests of small-scale fisherfolk, said in a statement that the Manila Bay Reclamation Project was undoubtedly an attack against the poorest sector of the country — the fisherfolk. The conversion of their fishing grounds to industrial and commercial use was said to be tantamount to various forms of displacement and uprooting of small fishers from their very source of livelihood, identity and life.

Despite being among the top fishing countries in the world, Guzman said that the Filipino fisherfolk were part of country's poorest sector.

"It's over 44 years since the Fisheries Decree of 1975 (Presidential Decree 704) was made effective. But the struggles of the fishers remain the

same," said Pablo Rosales, president of Pangisda Pilipinas.

Gilbert Reyes from the Pangisda Parañaque said that prior to the reclamation projects around Manila Bay, their lives were simpler and more abundant.

He also recounted the time when they were displaced from Freedom Island in Parañaque many years ago. "We were forced out of our homes where we get our livelihood and were transferred to a mountainous place," lamented Reyes.

Reyes said that because of lack of livelihood, most of his fellow fishers were compelled to either sell their homes or return to Parañaque at that time. The same scenario may repeat itself if the Manila Bay Reclamation Project pushes through.

"It is our duty as fisher folk to feed our families and bring food to the Filipinos," said Rosales. "The reclamation of Manila Bay will take this role away from us."

Tadem said the reclamation issue concerns a problem of governance as socio-economic disparities would worsen.

"The big businesses will benefit while millions of Filipinos will go hungry," said Reyes.

Call for a 'pro-people' rehabilitation

The Manila Bay Para sa Tao (MBPST) movement asserts that the solution to the Manila Bay problem remains the same. The group calls for a "pro-people" rehabilitation of Manila Bay that would genuinely benefit and promote not only the wellbeing of coastal communities, but also the future generations. Also, issues like food security and protection from calamities should be addressed.

"It is the citizens' duty to claim their rights amid this issue on reclamation," said Melchor Cayabyab from the Commission on Human Rights.

Guzman also urged that there should be a moratorium against reclamation projects not just around Manila Bay, but in the entire Philippines.

Toward the end of Thursday's event, the participants signed a unity statement in support of the ongoing campaign of the Manila Bay Para sa Tao (MBPST) for a people-centered rehabilitation.

Folk singer Bayang Barrios also performed during the event, while students of UP Diliman-College of Social Work and Community Development launched a video documentary featuring the life and struggles of fisher communities in Manila Bay's Parañaque area.

The forum led by the MBPST was participated in by groups from various sectors including individuals, student body and organizations, Pangisda chapters, environmental groups such as Wetlands International, Haribon Foundation and other civil society organizations.



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PROBLEMA SA BASURA, WORLD BANK AAYUDA

NAG-ALOK ng suporta ang World Bank (WB) sa mga ginagawang programa ng Filipinas para masolusyunan ang malaking problema sa plastic pollution.

(Mula sa pahina 16)

Sa isang forum, sinabi ni Agata Pawlowska, handang bigyan ng World Bank ang Filipinas ng financial support sa problema sa basura.

Aniya, isa sa nakikita niyang makatutulong nang husto para sa bansa ay ang multi-donor trust fund na Problue na inilunsad noong nakaraang taon.

“At the national level, we are already working with several national governments and the private sector in Southeast

Asia to support the development and implementation of policies and regulations, to increase knowledge on the quantities of plastic waste and pollution hotspots, to develop plastic policies and roadmaps, and to finance critical investments,” ani Pawlowska.

Batay sa 2015 report ng US based environmental group na Ocean Conservancy at ng McKinsey Center for Business and Environment, kanilang tinawag ang Filipinas bilang ikatlo sa

ocean polluter ng plastic sa mundo dahil sa 2.7 milyon toneladang basura ang nakocontribute kada taon.

Iginiit naman ni Joel Palma, chief executive officer ng World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)-Philippines na ang problema ng Filipinas sa basura ay dapat na masolusyunan sa lalong madaling panahon dahil inaasahan na dodoble ang volume nito pagsapit ng 2025.

**BENEDICT
ABAYGAR, JR.**



'Pinas, WB sanib-pwersa sa paglutas sa plastic pollution

NAG-ALOK ang World Bank (WB) ng suporta sa Pilipinas para sa malawakang problema ng bansa sa polusyon sa plastic kabilang ang pagkakaroon ng trust fund na suportado sa isang healthy at productive ocean.

Sinabi ni Agata Paw-

lowska, WB portfolio manager sa isang forum sa Manila na ang PROBLUE, multi-donor trust fund na inilunsad nakaraang taon ay tututok sa marine litter, patutunayang epektibo sa 'Pinas at natukoy bilang major contributor ng plastic pollution sa

karagatan.

"Some of the early commitments will be for East Asia," ani Pawlowska na nagsabing ang World Bank ay nagtatag ng marine plastic bilang prayoridad na pagkakalooban ng pinansyal na suporta sa rehiyon.



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SEARCH FOR TRUTH

ERNESTO P. MACEDA, Jr.

Not all about the whale

Have you heard the one about the dead whale that washed up on shore, its belly bursting from all the plastic it ingested? The next day, they suspended the elections. Apparently, there was no candidate remaining to campaign.



Our apologies for the irreverence. To the whale. As for candidates for public office, they do deserve the label though no one deserves to be swallowed up. We're seeing more and more plastic these days in all the distortions and contortions of principle in the name of the vote. Cuaresma is a sacrifice but when it coincides with the general elections and the campaign period every three years. It's as if we descended down another circle of hell.

Return to myth. The whale's misfortune is a metaphor here but the true story on which it is based is innately tragic. Whales, with their increasingly rare sightings, have become the unicorns of the oceans. The narwhal species, with its protruding horn, is called precisely that. The death of any one whale owing to our negligence is a wound we can hardly treat. It's a stark reminder of how delicate the balance of our marine ecosystem has become. And also of how our carelessness will come back to haunt us.

The episode in the Philippines was preceded last year by similar incidents around the world. Just this week, there was another one in Italy. Whales of different species have been washing up, killed by all the plastic they swallow: Sperm in Spain, Pilot in Thailand, Sperm in Indonesia, Cuvier's beaked here in Compostela Valley, Sperm in Italy.

Whales are the obvious avatars of the multitude of marine species that are affected by the crisis of plastics pollution - fish, birds, turtles, seals - all are victimized directly. You and I, being on top of the food chain, are the ones prejudiced indirectly as when the microfibers of the plastics ingested by our marine diet transfers to our own digestive systems.

Tragedy of the commons. According to scientists, every single piece of plastic ever made still exists. Unless something is done to regulate plastics production or to treat it as the hazardous waste that it actually is, the projection is that by 2050, plastics will outweigh all the fish in the sea.

The Philippines has a starring role in this horror story. We are a world leader in marine pollution, the 3rd largest marine pollutant what with our "sachet economy" coupled with our shameful absence of discipline. Here are some of our numbers: 60 billion sachets per year, 17.5 billion shopping bags. Don't look at the whale. Just think Manila bay clean up, Binondo estero clean up and wonder where the plastic in your home ends up ultimately.

Initiatives like brand audits conducted by NGOs at waste disposal sites show that its the multinational corporations that are top contributors to the detritus. This only highlights the urgency of tapping the private sector to cooperate in whatever niggardly effort government undertakes to achieve a modicum of success.

In all endeavors to find a solution to this crisis, the keyword is sustainable. Only by insisting on development that does not compromise the future's needs can we hope to succeed in meeting the needs of the present.

Emperor's new clothes. Add Senator Panfilo Lacson to the growing number of statesmen chomping at the bit each time Sec. Sal Panelo turns from spokesman for the Philippine President to spokesman for China, specially on developments in the West Philippine Sea. Lacson's credible solo, added to the Del Rosario-Carpio Morales duet, affirms in crescendo the voice of that segment uncomfortable with the progressive surrender of our prerogatives. Yes, there remain a few, a happy few, band of brothers, endowed with the courage to rally even against the most frightful odds.

The good senator cannot fathom the reasons why we would refuse to act when it's a stronger country that we face across the ring. This is weakness according to Lacson. And it is compounded by further impotence when it is advertised and even advanced as a justification. This will invite heightened bullying. Yes, why not just lay down, allow them in and occupy the entire country?

President Benigno Aquino III faced the same bully and the same fearsome missiles. But he didn't fold his cards. He went to the Hague. And what he did there and what he won there is a paragon of what little fellows can do and achieve when he decides that he can face down giants.

Warmer days ahead. "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night..." When Herodotus wrote this immortal line from his epic "Histories", he may not have anticipated how it might be used someday in a context other than the relay-like postal system employed by Persian couriers. Of course it has been informally adopted as a motto by the US Postal service. But in the present setting, we use it to reference the unflagging assault by our candidates on an anxious electorate.

It's been a struggle for them, thus far, having to campaign in this intolerable heat. Not only are they debilitated by the high temperatures, even their targets are wilting with their receptiveness turning into reproof. And its only going to get hotter. By the time election day comes around, it might just be a case of last man standing wins the vote.

Universidad de Manila. Yesterday, 3,000 new graduates were conferred their bachelor's, masteral and doctoral diplomas by the Universidad de Manila at the PICC Plenary Hall. This brings to 39,930 the total number of Manilenos that the UDM has graduated ever since it was established in 1995. Congratulations Mayor Joseph E. Estrada and the City Council of Manila. Their sustained support for the University through the years has made an enormous difference in the lives of these graduates, their families and their communities.



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Teresa's lifeline of an industry

At 35, Valera is hopeful. With her job at the municipal MRF, she sees a bright future for her children

Life had been difficult for Maria Teresa Valera. At age 15, she went around dump sites to look for recyclables. She was not alone in this undertaking. With her was her mother, and between the two of them, they tried very hard to eke out a living from scavenging – all this exposure to the elements and hazards, including shards of glass and bacteria, for the little food that they could buy out of their earnings for the day.



MARIA Teresa Valera segregates plastic waste at the Teresa MRF for grinding into pillow stuffing, hollow blocks filling and refuse derived fuel.

By the time she was 20 years old and had given birth to her first baby, she decided she had had enough of rummaging through other people's discards. It was about time she fulfilled her role as a wife. Sadly, this reprieve from the cares of earning for one's necessities would be brief as she soon had to take on the role of family breadwinner. Her husband lost his job as a driver at the municipal government of Teresa, Rizal. It was a sad and frustrating time. She could have taken over her husband's job, except that she did not know how to drive.

But there was one trade that she was adept at no matter how much she hated it. Scavenging was waiting, but this time, she was not on her own. The municipal government assigned her to its materials recovery facility (MRF) in Barangay Pantay. She welcomed the appointment. This time,

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her workplace was roofed and safe. It was a far cry from the unsanitary landfills where she had practically grown up.

"When I was widowed, I did not know how I would be able to provide for my family," says Valera. "I was fortunate to have been offered this job. Now, I am able to send my children to school. With my income, I am able to provide for their needs."

At 35, Valera is hopeful. With her job at the municipal MRF, she sees a bright future for her children.



Teresa's lifeline of an industry

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family and I eat three times a day. An empty stomach will not bring us far."

Eco workers

The Teresa MRF has become a livelihood hub, as it has attracted a number of residents who had been willing to work but could not find a stable job or who had to make do as scavengers.

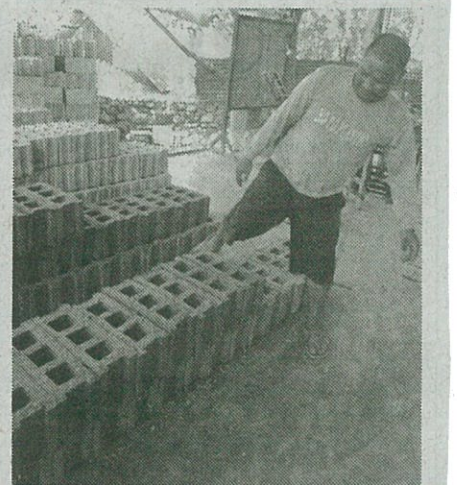
Among those who have been benefited by the MRF as a source of livelihood are three old women, a young single mother and her son and a couple making coco nets out of discarded coconut shells. Today, these former waste pickers earn daily wages.

Just as fortunate are the male workers with various assignments. They turn agricultural waste into compost or garden soil, plant fruits and vegetables in a mini forest, make charcoal out of paper waste and shred plastic waste into bits for making pillows, construction materials and refuse derived fuel (RDF). The men also make hollow and paving blocks, baluster and tiles out of a mixture of pulverized plastic and concrete.

Other than providing livelihood to the residents of Teresa, the MRF has also brought in substantial income to the coffers of the local government. Consumer items and products made by MRF workers include coco nets used for riprapping to prevent soil erosion or to induce vegetation in barren lots; paper charcoal for cooking; compost for farming; the mini forest for food; masonry for building houses, and the RDF for firing a cement plant furnace.

Last year, the Teresa government earned P1 million from sales of the MRF, according to Lina Ignao, the facility supervisor.

The earning is only incidental as the MRF is not an enterprise for profit, but is an essential component of the Teresa solid waste management program. Its establishment is in keeping with Republic Act 9003 or the



DIONISIO Aquino Jr. stacks hollow blocks at the Teresa MRF. The hollow blocks contain shredded plastic waste as part of the Rizal town's solid waste management program.

Sure daily wage

Before Dionisio Aquino Jr., 44 years old, was hired as a utility worker of the Teresa municipal government in 2004, he was a laborer. Unfortunately, it was an occasional job that did not give him enough earnings.

It was a difficult life for Aquino, who, as a construction worker, could not work when it rains. This would change, though, when he was appointed as one of the 25 staff members of the town's MRF.

"This time, even if it is raining, our work continues, so I am entitled to my daily wage," says Aquino, who receives P300 a day as the operator of the pulverizing machine that shreds plastic waste.

With his stable job, Aquino is able to put food on the family's table and to pay for his children's education.

Ten years ago, Gerardo Estrada lost his job as a welder in a local mag wheels factory that closed when it went bankrupt. When he found out about a possible job at the MRF, he applied and was accepted.

A number of his friends were surprised that, in his new job, his responsibilities include segregating waste. But to Estrada, it mattered more that "I have a regular job from which I would draw a salary regularly. At the least, my

Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, which requires every LGU to eliminate waste products by turning biodegradable waste to compost and fertilizer, to sell recyclable waste for reuse and reprocessing and to divert residual waste.

Residual wastes, such as cellophane, snack wrappers, cigarette packaging, shampoo sachets and the like, in turn, are used for making hollow blocks, bricks, balusters, tiles and RDF. This was revealed by Engr. Marlon Pielago, Teresa municipal environment and natural resources officer (Menro), who explained the need "of diverting residual waste by grinding and pulverizing them and embedding them in construction materials. This is better than dumping them back into the landfill, which will entail additional cost since they will need to be hauled back."



P.3 Teresa's lipeline of an industry

Industrial partner

Republic Cement has taken on a key role in Teresa's innovative waste management program, which is sustained through the support of the community, barangay and the private sector.

In making hollow blocks embedded with residual plastics, the MRF sources its supply from Republic Cement, which sells its cement at a discount. The MRF is thus able to produce hollow blocks at a lower cost and sell it at P1 or P2 lower than the market price, which benefits local consumers.

According to Pielago, a memorandum of agreement with Republic Cement stipulates the MRF to supply the company's plant with RDF for its cement kilns twice a month. In turn, a ton of RDF is paid with eight bags of cement. The cement goes to the barangay to encourage it to supply the MRF with plastic waste for conversion into RDF.

With the cement plant needing 15 tons of RDF per month, each of Teresa's nine villages can supply 1.6 tons of residual waste per month, good for 13 bags of cement needed for local construction. Pielago estimates that every barangay can earn as much as P35,000 worth of cement per year out of plastic waste.

On the local level, the partnership between the MRF and the cement plant is already producing benefits.

"The main benefit is you divert trash. Instead of bringing it to the landfill, you eliminate it from the system," says Pielago.

He adds the LGU earns money, which it can use for further improving its waste management program. The people become aware of segregation and make it a practice. Barangay leaders are happy and the village gets cleaner.

As for the cement plant, it avoids the use of coal, which produces a dirtier emission while saving on cost as traditional fuels are more expensive. If all cement manufacturers nationwide adopt the scheme, the benefit in

terms of waste reduction, employment and countryside development is exponential.

The MRF workers themselves are proud of their jobs.

"Before, there was really a lot of waste around," says Valera. "Now, it is less because it is being segregated."

"I'm happy because our town became known in the Philippines," she says, referring to the numerous national and regional awards received by Teresa for its effective implementation of RA 9003.

Valera adds she is glad that her work contributes to the success of Teresa's waste management program and to industries like cement manufacturers.

For his part, Estrada says the waste management program of Teresa not only provides jobs. By making RDF, he says plastic waste will no longer end up in rivers and instead be useful.

Lives better

The impact of industries in national development cannot be underestimated as manufacturers play an important role in safeguarding the environment. Their contribution in terms of providing jobs, however, has the most enduring social impact.

Ordinary people like Valera, Aquino and Estrada are among the thousands of workers indirectly employed in the value chain of the cement industry alone. The MRF and its jobs of producing fuel from plastic waste would not have been viable if not driven by demand from cement manufacturers that use RDF in their production.

"I want my two children to finish their education when the time comes, so they will not be like me who did not finish school," says Valera, who stopped going to school after Grade 6.

With a decent and stable job at the MRF, their dreams have become attainable.



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Snap pushes watershed protection

P.2



■ Lagawe town Mayor Martin Habawel Jr. leads the ceremonial tree planting ceremony as part of the launch of the Mount Binahagan Micro-Watershed Management Project. He was joined by acting Vice Mayor Vilma Alcayna and SN Aboitiz Power-Magat representatives led by President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Yu.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SNAP-Magat owns and operates the 360 to 380-megawatt MHPP, one of the largest hydro facilities

in Luzon. It is a joint venture between SN Power of Norway and AboitizPower, and is part of SNAP

Group, a leading provider and developer of renewable energy in the Philippines.



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SNAP pushes watershed

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

protection

P.1

THE municipality of Lagawe and SN Aboitiz Power-Magat (SNAP-Magat) have executed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) for the Mount Binahagan Micro-Watershed Management Project (MBMWMP), which will help protect and restore the Upper Magat Watershed.

The MBMWMP is one of Lagawe's initiatives now being supported by SNAP-Magat through the company's Partnerships in Uplifting Upland Natural Resources, Livelihoods and Assets (Punla) program.

According to lawyer Mike Hosillos, SNAP vice president and chief corporate services officer, the Punla program's goal is to support integrated watershed management projects in Lagawe, including the towns of Banaue, Hingyon and Mayoyao in order to protect and restore the Upper Magat Watershed.

On June 26, 1969, the Magat Watershed was proclaimed as a reservation under Proclamation 573 covering a total area of 430,861 hectares. It occupies the eastern part of Ifugao province

located within the municipalities of Mayoyao, Lagawe, Alfonso Lista and Aguinaldo in Ifugao; Santiago City and Ramon town in Isabela; and Diadi in Nueva Vizcaya.

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said the reservation supports the Magat Multi-Purpose Dam and other vital infrastructure that provide irrigation, flood control, hydroelectric power generation and other related uses.

Hosillos said the P1.7-million MBMWMP was set to run for three years and would involve six of the 20 *barangay* (villages) of Lagawe that were covered by the watershed area.

Led by Lagawe Mayor Martin Habawel Jr., a ceremonial tree planting ceremony was conducted as part of the signing of the agreement and the MBMWMP launching. He was joined by acting

Vice Mayor Vilma Alcayna and SNAP-Magat representatives led by President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Yu.

"I am thankful to SNAP-Magat. Indeed, this is a blessing to the municipality of Lagawe, especially in the Upper Ayangan [area] because Mount Binahagan is rampant [with] illegal logging," Habawel said.

For his part, Yu reaffirmed SNAP-Magat's commitment to environmental stewardship.

"We believe that the value we create is a value that we share with our host communities and partners. By helping to control the erosion, [this project] prolongs the water flow into the Magat Reservoir that allows us to continue to deliver more value to our community," he said.

With this, Yu said the community could benefit through the project's livelihood and sustainability components.

A multi-purpose dam used primarily for irrigating about 85,000 hectares of agricultural lands and flood control, the Magat Dam is also used to generate power through the Magat Hydroelectric Power Plant (MHPP).



AMA WATER IN THE PIPELINE

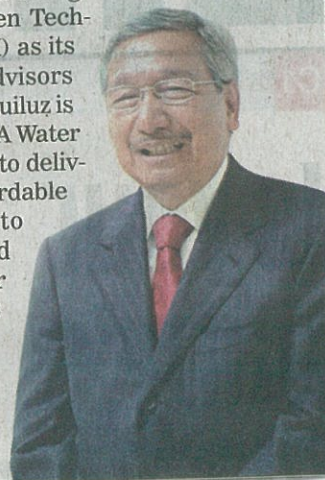
AMA Group Holdings Chairman Amable R. Aguiluz V said AMA Water is fast tracking its construction of a 300mld world-class water treatment plant along the lakeshore of Laguna Lake in its desire to help address the current water supply crisis being experienced in Metro Manila utilizing its water right up to 300mld granted by the Laguna Lake Development Authority.

Aguiluz said this project will be able to bring the much needed water supply augmentation within 10 months from its planned plant in an area close enough to the Metro area. He said he will work out the required arrangements both with the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System in response to President Duterte's call to address this problem on a long-term basis.

Aguiluz said that Laguna Lake, the country's biggest freshwater resource located close to the heart of the national capital region, was already being harnessed by both Maynilad in Putatan,

Muntinlupa City at 300 mld, and Manila Water in Cardona, Rizal at 120mld.

For this project, AMA Group Holdings is partnering with Ion Exchange, a Singapore-based company with projects all over Asia. AMA Water has signed as well an agreement with Aquagen Technologies, Inc. (ATI) as its local technical advisors for this project. Aguiluz is confident that AMA Water is well positioned to deliver clean and affordable drinking water to NCR going forward way ahead of other planned solutions like Kaliwa Dam which reportedly is scheduled to be operational in 2022.





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LAS PIÑAS HOSTS MAYNILAD'S BIGGEST WATER TREATMENT PLANT.

Engineering conglomerate Megawide and the MUL consortium (MUL), comprised of Toshiba Water Solutions Pvt. Ltd. and LinkENERGIE, recently started the construction of Maynilad's Las Piñas water reclamation facility (WRF). This is Maynilad's largest wastewater treatment plant at 88 MLD (million liters per day) capacity. The facility will serve around 660,000 customers once completed in 2021. At the ground-breaking for the project were (from left to right): Albert Saringo, MUL consortium project director; Koichi Matsui, Toshiba Water Solutions chairperson and managing director; Rosabella Bantog, Las Piñas City engineer; Henry Medina, Las Piñas city councilor; Frederick Tan, Megawide deputy head for construction; April Aguilar, representative of Las Piñas City Mayor Imelda Aguilar; Ramoncito Fernandez, Maynilad president; Randolph Estrellado, Maynilad COO; Mark Anthony Santos, city councilor; Yolanda Lucas, Maynilad program management head; Antonio Garcia, Maynilad wastewater management head; and Francisco Matias, LinkENERGIE CEO.